

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL LIFE AND THOUGHT FOURTH SERIES

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

A. K. GUNDY



CAMBRIDGE

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

RICHARD II AND THE REBEL EARL

The reign of Richard II and the circumstances of his deposition have long been subject to intense debate. This new interpretation of the politics of the late fourteenth century offers an in-depth survey of Richard's reign from the perspective of one of the leading nobles who came to oppose him, Thomas Beauchamp, the Appellant earl of Warwick. This is the first full-length study of one of Richard II's opponents to explore not only why the earl rebelled against the king, but also why Richard lost his throne. Rather than offering the traditional explanation of a subject grown too mighty, Alison Gundy sets Warwick's rule in the context of the political and constitutional framework of the period. The interplay of local and national events helps to reveal Warwick's motives as a long-serving member of the nobility faced with a king determined to rule in a manner at odds with contemporary political structures.

A. K. GUNDY studied at the University of St Andrews and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge before becoming a history teacher at Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge. This is her first book. She is also the author of 'The Earl of Warwick and the Royal Affinity in the Politics of the West Midlands', in M. Hicks (ed.), *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England* (2001).

Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought
Fourth Series

General Editor

ROSAMOND MCKITTERICK

Professor of Medieval History, University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Sidney Sussex College

Advisory Editors

CHRISTINE CARPENTER

Professor of Medieval English History, University of Cambridge

JONATHAN SHEPARD

The series *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought* was inaugurated by G. G. Coulton in 1921; Professor Rosamond McKitterick now acts as General Editor of the Fourth Series, with Professor Christine Carpenter and Dr Jonathan Shepard as Advisory Editors. The series brings together outstanding work by medieval scholars over a wide range of human endeavour extending from political economy to the history of ideas.

A list of titles in the series can be found at:
www.cambridge.org/medievallifeandthought

RICHARD II AND THE REBEL EARL

A. K. GUNDY



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521837545

© A. K. Gundy 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed in the United Kingdom by CPI Group Ltd, Croydon CRO 4YY

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Gundy, A. K.

Richard II and the rebel earl / A.K. Gundy.

pages cm. – (Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought, fourth series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-83754-5 (hardback)

1. Richard II, King of England, 1367–1400. 2. Great Britain–History–Richard II, 1377–1399. 3. Henry IV, King of England, 1367–1413. 4. Great Britain–History–Henry IV, 1399–1413. 5. Great Britain–Kings and rulers–Biography. I. Title.

DA235.G86 2013

942.03'8092–dc23

[B]

2013009572

ISBN 978-0-521-83754-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For KEG. And in memory of DH and HWG.

CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	page viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xi
INTRODUCTION	I
I THE GEO-POLITICAL FRAMEWORK	32
2 1369–1382	61
3 1383–1389	99
4 1389–1397	139
5 1397–1401	190
CONCLUSION	237
<i>Appendix I The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401</i>	244
<i>Appendix IIA Active Warwickshire justices of the peace, 1369–1401</i>	262
<i>Appendix IIB Active Worcestershire justices of the peace, 1369–1401</i>	265
<i>Bibliography</i>	267
<i>Index</i>	283

FIGURES

1	Warwickshire, with pre-1972 boundaries	<i>page</i> xiv
2	Worcestershire, with pre-1972 boundaries	xv
3	Major geo-political features of the West Midlands	35
4	Noble land-holding patterns in 1369	45
5	The partition of the Beauchamp estates, 1397	196

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of my research and the even longer period of writing this book, I have accumulated many debts of gratitude, more than can be mentioned here. There are, however, several people to whom I owe special thanks. First of all, I would like to thank the various bodies who have financed me: the Knowle Hill Trust, who have helped with book expenses; the British Academy, for a two-year studentship; and the trustees of the Prince Consort and Thirwall Fund, who elected me to a studentship. Many historians have been kind enough to share with me their stimulating ideas and comments and encouragement. In particular, I would like to thank Helen Castor, John Watts, Benjamin Thompson, Richard Partington and the late, and sadly missed, Simon Walker. Their support and advice has been invaluable, although they should not be held responsible for any errors in the research or argument in this book, which are entirely my own. Equally invaluable has been the unfailing helpfulness of the staff of those record offices and libraries that I visited, even when faced with an apparently endless stream of requests for obscure and dusty manuscripts. In particular, I would like to thank the staff at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Worcester Cathedral Library, the Warwickshire County Record Office, the Hereford and Worcester Record Office, the British Library and the reader services desk and productions staff at The National Archives. I have also been lucky in the support of my friends and colleagues: Christine Wiggins and John Stevens, for their checking of the text, and Dominick McIntyre, for the not-so-gentle reminders to finish this book, the technical support and the endless cups of tea. My colleagues and students at Hills Road Sixth Form College have, in recent years, been a constant source of encouragement and interest. However, my largest debts of gratitude must be to my supervisor, Professor Christine Carpenter, and to my family. Without Christine's encouragement, support, advice and unfailingly rigorous

Acknowledgements

standards, I would not have been able to produce either my original thesis or this book: my debt to her should be clear throughout, although the research and interpretation of the evidence are my own. Finally, without the encouragement of my parents and grandmother, I would never have had the chance to study history. It is to them that this book is dedicated.

Note: As the research for this book was completed largely before the online version of the Parliament Rolls became available, all references are to the paper version.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BIHR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BL	British Library
BRL	Birmingham Reference Library
<i>CAD</i>	<i>Catalogue of Ancient Deeds</i>
Carpenter, <i>Locality and Polity</i>	M. C. Carpenter, <i>Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499</i> (Cambridge, 1992)
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i>
<i>CFR</i>	<i>Calendar of Fine Rolls</i>
<i>CIMisc</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous</i>
<i>CIPM</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Foedera</i>	<i>Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae etc.</i> , ed. T. Rymer (20 vols., London, 1704–35)
<i>GEC</i>	V. Gibbs, H. Doubleday <i>et al.</i> (eds.), <i>The Complete Peerage</i> (13 vols., London, 1910–40)
Given-Wilson, <i>Royal Household</i>	C. Given-Wilson, <i>The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England 1360–1413</i> (New Haven, 1986)
Goodman, <i>Loyal Conspiracy</i>	A. Goodman, <i>The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard II</i> (London, 1971)

List of abbreviations

Harriss, <i>Shaping the Nation</i>	G. L. Harriss, <i>Shaping the Nation: England 1360–1461</i> (Oxford, 2005)
<i>Historia Vitae</i>	<i>Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi</i> , ed. G. B. Stow (Philadelphia, 1977)
HP	J. S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe, <i>The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1386–1421</i> (4 vols., Stroud, 1992)
HWRO	Hereford and Worcester Record Office
JBS	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
JMH	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
<i>Knighton's Chronicle</i>	<i>Knighton's Chronicle, 1337–1396</i> , ed. G. H. Martin (Oxford, 1995)
L&I 9	<i>List of Sheriffs for England and Wales</i> , ed. A. Hughes (PRO Lists and Indexes, main series, 9, London, 1898; repr. New York, 1963)
<i>List of Escheators</i>	<i>A Typescript List of Escheators for England and Wales</i> , ed. A. C. Wood (PRO, List and Index Society 72, repr. New York, 1971)
McKisack, <i>Fourteenth Century</i>	M. McKisack, <i>The Fourteenth Century</i> (Oxford, 1959)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (online edition), www.oxforddnb.com
Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute'	J. B. Post, 'Courts, Councils and Arbitrators in the Ladbroke Manor Dispute, 1382–1400', in R. F. Hunnisett and J. B. Post (eds.), <i>Medieval Legal Records Edited in Memory of C. A. F. Meekings</i> (London, 1978)
PRO	Public Record Office
<i>Return: Members of Parliament</i>	<i>Reports from the Lords' Committees Touching the Dignity of a Peer of the Realm: Return of Members of Parliament, England 1213–1702</i> (2 vols., London, 1878)

List of abbreviations

RP	<i>Rotuli Parliamentorum</i> (6 vols., London, 1767–77)
RS	Rolls Series
Saul, <i>Richard II</i>	N. Saul, <i>Richard II</i> (New Haven, 1997)
SBT	Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
TNA	The National Archives
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
Tuck, <i>Richard II</i>	J. A. Tuck, <i>Richard II and the English Nobility</i> (London, 1973)
<i>VCH Warwks.</i>	<i>The Victoria History of the County of Warwick</i> (8 vols., London, 1904–69)
<i>VCH Worcs.</i>	<i>The Victoria History of the County of Worcester</i> (4 vols., London, 1901–26)
Walker, <i>Lancastrian Affinity</i>	S. K. Walker, <i>The Lancastrian Affinity, 1361–1399</i> (Oxford, 1990)
Walsingham, <i>Historia Anglicana</i>	T. Walsingham, <i>Historia Anglicana</i> , ed. H. T. Riley (2 vols., RS, London, 1863–4)
WCL	Worcester Cathedral Library
WCRO	Warwickshire County Record Office
<i>Westminster Chronicle</i>	<i>The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394</i> , eds. L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey (Oxford, 1982)



Figure 1 Warwickshire, with pre-1972 boundaries



Figure 2 Worcestershire, with pre-1972 boundaries

INTRODUCTION

On 30 September 1399, Richard II was deposed in favour of his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke. Although the deposition of Edward II seventy years before had created a precedent for the removal of the king, Edward had been replaced by his son and heir, Edward III, whose claim to the throne was unquestionable and unquestioned.¹ By contrast Richard II had no son and heir, although in 1399 there were at least two candidates descended from Edward III, Henry Bolingbroke and Edmund Mortimer. Bolingbroke's claim was the only one pressed with vigour, however, since Mortimer was a minor.² Unlike Edward III's experience, Henry's hold on the throne was soon challenged: first by a rebellion in Richard II's name in early 1400 and then by two uprisings led by the Percys in 1403 and 1405, whose aim was to replace Bolingbroke with Mortimer.³ The difference between contemporary attitudes to the respective claims to the throne of Edward III and Bolingbroke is clear, yet it is significant that, despite the equivocal nature of Henry's claim in 1399, the capture and deposition of Richard II were contemplated and completed with remarkable ease.⁴ In other words, although in 1399 those involved must have been aware that the deposition of their anointed king without the safeguard of an obvious heir to replace him was both unprecedented and dangerous, nevertheless they were willing to support Henry's challenge to Richard. What had Richard done to deserve such desperate action?

Historians' explanations of Richard's rule and fall have been multifarious, reflecting the difficulties of interpreting the politics of the period. Widely differing analyses have pointed either to Richard's insanity or to his

¹ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 71–104; N. Fryde, *The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 195–200.

² Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 220–4.

³ J. H. Wylie, *The History of England under Henry IV* (4 vols., London, 1884–98), 1, pp. 98–104; J. L. Kirby, *Henry IV of England* (London, 1970), pp. 86–8, 152–8, 182–8.

⁴ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 494–6.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

lucid attempts at autocracy. More recent revisionism has argued for a much more favourable interpretation of Richard II's reign, suggesting that his fall was accidental rather than the natural corollary of his tyrannical rule.⁵ This benign interpretation raises in turn some important questions about current assumptions concerning the workings of the fourteenth-century polity. These questions have become particularly pressing in the light of recent research on the fifteenth-century polity, the findings of which have created an interpretational dichotomy between the historiographies of the two centuries. This dichotomy needs to be resolved. The main purpose of this Introduction will be to review the existing research on the period and to delineate a new framework within which Richard's rule can be assessed. It will be particularly important to establish whether he had a consistent or coherent policy towards his rule. This is necessary because, whilst the earliest analyses of the reign interpreted Richard's policies as a sustained attempt to defy or destroy the existing framework of government, more recent interpretations have emphasised the seemingly contrasting nature of the two 'halves' of his reign. The latter argue that there was little to unite these two halves with regard to either royal policy or the context for opposition to his rule. To understand the period, therefore, it is necessary both to comprehend how these divergent interpretations have emerged and to consider whether they can be sustained.

Stubbs, the first modern historian of the reign, considered the period to be both morally and politically bankrupt. The political crises of the period were, for Stubbs, the result of struggles between rival parties driven merely by ambition, not by the 'great causes' of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶ The reason for Stubbs' dislike of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was rooted in the Whig interpretation of history, which saw progress in terms of the growth and triumph of parliament over royal power.⁷ Within this framework, however, Stubbs had an interesting view of Richard's reign. He argued that Richard was imbued with a 'high sense of prerogative' at an early age, and that this led him to attempt to rule despotically. His first attempt was thwarted by the Appellants in 1387–8, which led to a bout of 'constitutional' rule in the early 1390s.⁸ This gave way to another attempt at absolutism in which Richard 'resolutely ... challenged the constitution', which, for Stubbs, meant that he was trying

⁵ See below, pp. 10–13, for a more detailed discussion of these views.

⁶ W. H. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England* (3 vols., 3rd edn, Oxford, 1887), II, pp. 319–20. See also C. Plummer, Introduction to J. Fortescue, *The Governance of England* (Oxford, 1885), esp. pp. 15–16.

⁷ Stubbs, *Constitutional History* II, pp. 521–2. These developments have been discussed most fully in: M. C. Carpenter, 'Political and Constitutional History: Before and After McFarlane', in R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy* (Stroud, 1995), pp. 177–80.

⁸ Stubbs, *Constitutional History* II, pp. 486–7, 500–2.

Introduction

to rule without parliament.⁹ Thus, Stubbs argued that Richard maintained a consistent theory of absolutism, which he attempted to put into practice on two separate occasions. The eventual result of Richard's policies was his deposition; his rule, which was 'quite incompatible with the actual current of political history', was only tolerated until a new leader appeared to replace him.¹⁰

The next significant interpretation of the politics of the late fourteenth century can be found in the work of Tout. Superficially, Tout's work was a reaction against Stubbs' framework in that he denied the constitutional significance with which Stubbs had vested parliament. Instead, Tout concentrated on the great offices of state which, unlike parliament, operated continuously. But, despite this shift in emphasis, much of Stubbs' framework remained intact in Tout's work. He retained the Stubbsian idea of competing political 'parties' which he defined as 'court' and the 'aristocratic opposition'. Tout simply moved the scene of the struggle for power between the king/court and nobility from parliament to the great offices of state and the royal household.¹¹

Like Stubbs, Tout viewed Richard as an absolutist monarch. His particular argument was based on the assumption that, as the great offices of state went 'out of court', they became simultaneously less easy for the king to control and also targets ripe for those who wished to restrict the king's power. As a result, Tout interpreted royal policy in the 1380s as a deliberate attempt to reverse this draining of the king's executive power. The method was twofold: first, the expansion of the chamber as 'a special preserve of the court party', accompanied by the increasing use of the signet seal as an instrument of the prerogative. Second, the 'court' successfully 'captured' the great offices of state through the nomination of ministers acceptable to the king.¹² After the reaction of 1386–8, however, Tout agrees with Stubbs that Richard ruled in a more 'constitutional' manner whilst retaining a high notion of the royal prerogative.¹³ Tout thought that it was Richard's experiences of wielding unlimited power in Ireland in 1394–5 that persuaded him to put his theories of kingship into practice. Unlike Stubbs, however, Tout did not see Richard's policies as essentially alien to the development of medieval government; rather, he argued that Richard failed because his style of kingship was merely 'premature' rather than completely at odds with long-term political developments. This interpretation of Richard's style

⁹ Ibid., pp. 506–7, 513–15, 521–2. ¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 486–7, 524–5, 533–6.

¹¹ T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England* (6 vols., Manchester, 1920–33), III, pp. 327, 390; Carpenter, 'Before and After McFarlane', pp. 180–3.

¹² Tout, *Administrative History* III, pp. 402, 404–5.

¹³ Ibid., III, pp. 468–9; IV, p. 31. Stubbs, *Constitutional History* II, pp. 506–7.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

of kingship as an early precursor of successful Tudor rule has become an increasingly widely held belief in recent writing on the period, if on rather different grounds.¹⁴

Although Steel's Freudian analysis of Richard II, which appeared in 1941, seemed to signal a very different methodology in interpreting Richard's motives, the Stubbs–Tout framework still remained in place and was later reiterated by Jones, who argued that Richard was consistently attempting to implement in his policies his own theories of royal absolutism.¹⁵ Jones' book did not appear until 1968 and it is curiously unsynchronised with the general McFarlane-led trend of historiography of the time.¹⁶ Like Stubbs and Tout, Jones envisaged a monarchy which was increasingly at the mercy of its 'predatory' subjects, especially the powerful magnates. Richard's policy was justified by Jones as a monarchical reaction to this situation with an attempt to restore the balance of power. Like Tout, Jones also argued that Richard's attempts at absolutism were revived successfully under the Tudors.¹⁷

The Victorian framework was overturned in the work of McFarlane, who reversed the assumed power structures which had been inherent in both Stubbs' and Tout's interpretations. Instead of the weak king powerless in the face of 'overmighty subjects', McFarlane emphasised that executive authority lay ultimately with the monarch:

It is clear that members of the nobility ... had often very definite ... views on policy ... But the king governed. He took or rejected advice; he appointed servants to obey his orders. But even the greatest of his subjects were councillors, not aspirants to office.¹⁸

McFarlane argued that if it was the king who was responsible for the ultimate smooth functioning of government, then political crises were also the result of monarchical misrule, not of the essentially ungovernable disposition of his subjects. Famously commenting that historians had

¹⁴ Tout, *Administrative History* III, p. 495; IV, pp. 1–6, 32–3, 68; J. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), p. 165; below, pp. 10–13.

¹⁵ A. Steel, *Richard II* (Cambridge, 1941); R. H. Jones, *The Royal Policy of Richard II: Absolutism in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 6–8, chs. 10–12. Harvey also follows Jones' emphasis on a consistent royal policy, and argues that Richard began his plans to enhance his power from as early as 1387; however, Harvey sees this not as revenge for the Appellants' actions, but as in a positive light as a 'self-conscious and highly sophisticated attempt by a medieval king of outstanding intellect and sensibility to achieve real power': J. H. Harvey, 'Richard II and York', in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 203–4.

¹⁶ Below, pp. 7–10.

¹⁷ Jones, *Royal Policy of Richard II*, pp. 182–4; quotation from p. 178. See also pp. 1–6, 176–85, esp. p. 182. But note also his comment that: 'It was his [Richard's] behaviour which had forced the deposition': p. 1.

¹⁸ K. B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 119–20.

Introduction

been too much the 'king's friends', McFarlane focused his research on the estates, functions and interests of the nobility.¹⁹ Significantly for this study, McFarlane used the Beauchamps as a typical example of the role of the nobility in politics and governance. In general, the family had a long and distinguished record of service to the crown. The only blots on the family escutcheon were the respective involvements of Guy and Thomas Beauchamp in the opposition to Edward II and Richard II, the two kings whose rule ended in disaster and who were characterised as wayward or dangerous by contemporaries and historians alike.²⁰ If noble rebellion was neither a normal nor a frequent part of medieval politics, McFarlane argued, then typical relations between the king and his subjects must have rested on a very different footing. Instead of mutual antagonism and mistrust, he suggested that normally both the king and his subjects had the same aims: defence of the realm and the maintenance of good order. Whilst monarchy remained both hereditary and personal, there was always the risk of an incompetent or downright dangerous king, such as Edward II, Richard II or Henry VI, but it was always possible for a reasonably active, competent and adult king to rule without attracting demands for his deposition. Rebellions and depositions such as those witnessed under Richard II were aberrations caused by royal inability to meet even the basic requirements of rule, not by the machinations of his ambitious and fundamentally disloyal subjects.²¹

Despite McFarlane's emphasis on the essentially co-operative nature of relations between king and magnates, subsequent work on the reign, although inspired by his ideas, has tended to revert to a version of the Victorian view of the 'overmighty subject' and the 'undermighty king'. This tendency has reached fruition in the most recent research on the period by Given-Wilson, Saul and Barron.²² There is, however, an important difference between the Stubbsian and modern versions of the reign. Whilst Stubbs' interpretation of Richard's rule emphasised that his policies could never work within the context of contemporary political development (although for the wrong reasons), recent revisionism has portrayed Richard's rule as a 'sensible and successful' attempt to solve the perceived problems faced by medieval kings in controlling their subjects.²³ At the same time, interpretations of the reign have become rather fractured; increasingly, it is argued that Richard's rule in the 1380s bore little resemblance to that of the 1390s. Although Stubbs and Tout portrayed the early

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–18, quotation from p. 2. Note also his comment that 'the apologists for monarchy are far more royalist than Richard II': p. 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 187–210, esp. p. 193. ²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 119–21. ²² Below, pp. 10–13.

²³ Above, pp. 2–3; quotation from C. Given-Wilson, 'The King and the Gentry in Fourteenth-Century England', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 37 (1987), p. 95.

to mid 1390s as the most peaceful or 'constitutional' portion of the reign, they did so with the proviso that Richard continued to harbour aspirations to autocracy. McFarlane is perhaps the only historian to have cast serious doubt on the 'constitutional' period of the reign by arguing that Richard was dissembling in order to secure revenge on his former opponents.²⁴ This interpretation has not achieved widespread acceptance, however, since it has been assumed that Richard could not have dissembled so successfully for so long.²⁵ Indeed, the question of whether his revenge was not a secret at all, but openly expressed in his policies, has never been addressed. In fact, far from considering how or whether the events and policies of the 1380s might have relevance to the interpretation of the 1390s, it has become increasingly common to portray the period of 1389 to 1397 as 'harmonious'.²⁶ But this has led to a new set of interpretational problems. If Richard's rule was as peaceful and as successful as some historians now perceive it to be, why did it apparently break down so dramatically and suddenly in 1397, and why was he deposed in 1399? Furthermore, can this interpretational shift in favour of Richard be sustained within the context of his reign and late medieval politics in general? The answer to these questions can be found in the background to these developments.

Part of this background is the way in which elements of McFarlane's work, in particular his interest in the world of 'private' connections, have been understood and used in the late medieval historiography which he inspired. McFarlane had taken the idea of using these connections as a means of analysing and understanding politics and the role of magnate affinities from the work of Namier on the parliamentary connections of the eighteenth century. Initially, McFarlane's use of this device led him to conclusions in some ways reminiscent of Stubbs':

There was the same element of voluntary interdependence [as in the eighteenth century], the same competition for 'place' and the same absence of any separate fund of political principle. Held together by little else than the hope of gain, these affinities swelled with success and dwindled in adversity.²⁷

²⁴ K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 36–42.

²⁵ Saul has recently argued this: Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 201–2.

²⁶ Given-Wilson, 'King and the Gentry', p. 95; Saul, *Richard II*, ch. 11 and pp. 366–8. However, the work of Fletcher has begun to move away from this view: C. Fletcher, *Richard II: Manhood, Youth and Politics, 1377–99* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 43–4, 249–58. Fletcher argues for a new interpretational framework based on the tension between Richard's attempts to assert his 'manly' authority, especially in the field of foreign campaigns, and those who sought to restrain him and control royal financial excesses.

²⁷ K. B. McFarlane, 'Parliament and "Bastard Feudalism"', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London, 1981), p. 19. This essay was originally published in 1944. Compare this with Stubbs' comments, quoted on p. 2. For Namier's influence on McFarlane, see Carpenter, 'Before and After McFarlane', pp. 186–90.

Introduction

However, as McFarlane's research into these 'private' connections continued, his views on how medieval politics worked became increasingly complex. As a result, he began to allow that there was also a place for principles such as good lordship, worship and service in the politics of late medieval England. Moreover, he realised that whilst the network of private interests and the role of 'good lordship' which were intrinsic to stability may have created a certain amount of 'corruption and wire-pulling', actual bodily violence was much rarer.²⁸ It is certainly true that McFarlane developed and adapted Namier's idea of patronage, which McFarlane saw as an essential part of 'good lordship', in ways which might suggest a lack of principle. A lord offered his client protection through his influence. In turn, the client's support gave the lord the influence and 'worship' he needed in order to carry out his duties. The arrangement was both convenient and mutually reinforcing.²⁹ The king, meanwhile, was the head of the greatest affinity of them all, and had access to a greater store of 'patronage' than any other lord.³⁰ But, crucially, McFarlane was also careful to state that 'I am not suggesting that there were no politics save jobbery.' The king and nobility also had important parts to play in the formulation and control of policy which went far beyond the distribution of patronage and competition for place.³¹ This proviso notwithstanding, McFarlane's successors have tended to seize on this 'private' aspect to such an extent that medieval politics have come to be interpreted almost entirely in terms of 'patronage', to the neglect of other, more 'public' areas of government. As a result, although work in the late 1960s and early 1970s suggested promising lines of inquiry for a better understanding of Ricardian politics, this has tended to be subverted by the continuing fashion for the use of 'patronage' as the dominant interpretative tool to explicate late medieval politics.³²

The flurry of publications on Richard II in the late 1960s and early 1970s marked the McFarlane-inspired revival of interest in the politics of the late fourteenth century. In general, this new research expanded on McFarlane's idea that rebellion did not come naturally to the nobility, and, in innovative and interesting ways, it began to develop the idea of Richard as a 'despotic' king. Barron's important study of Richard's tyranny showed that the charges levelled against Richard at his deposition were largely substantiated by the governmental records of the period and could be placed firmly within the structures of

²⁸ McFarlane, *Nobility*, pp. 102–21; quotation from p. 115.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 113–16. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 119–20; the quotation is from p. 119.

³² Carpenter, 'Before and After McFarlane', pp. 190–3.

contemporary political thought.³³ Goodman's McFarlanesque study of the five Appellants was an important preliminary analysis of their careers, lands, affinities and motives for rebelling. This was the first time that the aristocratic rebels of the period had been examined in their own right, and the results were both revealing and tantalising, particularly for the period leading up to the crisis of 1386–8. By examining the interests of the Appellants, Goodman was able to suggest that Richard's policies in the 1380s may have threatened the local dominance of these lords, who, in the case of the three senior Appellants at least, all had long, if not exactly glorious, records of service to the crown prior to their rebellion. This seems to confirm McFarlane's argument that rebellion was not a natural or obvious resort for the magnates. Indeed, the title which Goodman chose for his book, *The Loyal Conspiracy*, makes it clear that he perceived the Appellants' actions to be driven by their loyalty to the king, not by their innate antipathy to monarchical rule.³⁴ By contrast, his analysis of the politics of the 1390s is generally less convincing, and marks the beginning of the fracturing of the coherent framework which had bound together previous interpretations of the reign. It is particularly noticeable that Goodman found Richard's coup of 1397 to be 'puzzling'.³⁵ This puzzlement at Richard's actions in 1397–9 has become increasingly common and is a direct result of the loss of an interpretative framework which could be applied consistently to late fourteenth-century politics.

The disjointedness of post-McFarlane interpretations of Richard's reign is amply demonstrated in the work of Tuck. He developed the idea of a 'system of patronage', which he used to explain the success or failure of a king. This system was based on the Namier/McFarlane-inspired concepts of the twin motives of profit and promotion which drove the engine of politics. Tuck argued that the nobility needed easy access to the king and his patronage in order to secure grants for their local followers. If a magnate failed in this, either because he could not reach the king and his supply of favour, or because the king distributed his patronage amongst a too narrow or undeserving group of men, then the result would be that the magnate's followers would leave his service in order to secure the promotions and profits which they sought. As a result, the magnate would lose influence locally. Tuck argued that, in the 1380s, Richard's patronage was aimed at an overly narrow and possibly

³³ C. M. Barron, 'The Tyranny of Richard II', *BIHR*, 41 (1968), 1–18.

³⁴ Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 1–15, 104, 108, 113.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–72; quotation from p. 65. For a similar conclusion, see also J. Taylor, 'Richard II's Views on Kingship', *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, 15.5 (1971), pp. 199–200.

Introduction

unsuitable group of men.³⁶ Tuck also elaborated on Goodman's suggestion that Richard was using his control of patronage to build up the regional power of his friends to the detriment of established magnates, who were unable to compete for gentry loyalty. Thus, the earl of Arundel was threatened by the rapid consolidation of power in the hands of men such as de Vere and Burley in the Welsh Marches. Similarly, Tuck argued that the rapid promotion of John Beauchamp of Holt and the concomitant grants he received in Worcestershire may have created a rival for power in the earl of Warwick's traditional sphere of influence.³⁷ Like Tout, Tuck thought that Richard used the machinery of the chamber and signet seal as a conduit for his patronage in order to circumvent the other offices of state over which he had less control. At the same time, Richard also made sure that 'his' men were nominated to positions of influence within these offices.³⁸ Tuck's analysis of the politics of the 1380s is tantalising. Was Richard attempting to intrude royal power into the localities in an unprecedented manner, and did this policy contribute to the backlash against him? Unfortunately, both the nature and direction of recent research on the period has meant that these questions have not only gone unanswered, but also unasked. Because Tuck concentrated solely on the ability of the nobility to acquire royal patronage for their men, the geo-political impact of Richard's policy has not been explored. As recent work on the fifteenth century is now showing, the key to local influence was not the ability to gain access to such grants, but rather how the redistribution of lands and offices might affect the balance of landed power in a region.³⁹

Like Goodman, Tuck did not find any cohesive or coherent link between the politics of the 1380s and those of the 1390s. In Tuck's case, this is because what he cited as the main political issue of the 1380s, controversy over the distribution of patronage, seemed to be missing from the politics of the 1390s. Like most historians before him, with the exception of McFarlane, Tuck saw Richard's rule in the early 1390s as largely successful, with Richard bowing to a form of conciliar restriction on his patronage, and avoiding the controversial promotions and grants which had attracted such opprobrium in the 1380s.⁴⁰ However, if the 1390s were much more peaceful than the 1380s, the crisis of 1397–9 still had to be explained. Goodman had been unable to do this, but Tuck emphasised the essentially fragile nature of the harmony between the king and his

³⁶ J. A. Tuck, 'Richard II's System of Patronage', in du Boulay and Barron (eds.), *Reign of Richard II*, pp. 1–5, 15–20; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 70–86.

³⁷ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 62, 73–5.

³⁸ Tout, *Administrative History* III, pp. 404–5; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 58–71; above, p. 3.

³⁹ Below, pp. 13–17. ⁴⁰ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 137–55, esp. pp. 139–40.

former opponents, which, he argued, was shattered from c. 1394 by new disagreements arising from Richard's attempts to secure a permanent peace with France. This interpretation does provide an explanation for Richard's actions in July 1397. Tuck argued that Richard feared a new noble rebellion, and that the arrests of Warwick, Arundel and Gloucester were a pre-emptive strike.⁴¹ After this, his insecurity drove him to rule in an increasingly tyrannical manner, which could not be sustained, but which could only be controlled by his removal from power. Thus, in keeping with McFarlane's ideas, Tuck argued that the crises of the reign were precipitated not through any weakness in royal power, but because if a king chose to exercise his authority irresponsibly, there was very little his subjects could do to stop him other than to depose him.⁴²

Whereas Tuck saw Richard's deposition as inevitable, the revisionism of Given-Wilson's, Saul's and Barron's more recent writing has imposed a new interpretative structure on the period which has been more favourable to Richard. Given-Wilson's work has been particularly crucial in this respect, since he sees Richard's introduction of a royal affinity into the political structure of the country as a logical and necessary progression in the extension of royal power into the localities.⁴³ Given-Wilson argues that a royal affinity was a necessary adjunct to the king's power because without it he was unable to exert sufficient coercive force to resist the military might of his noble opponents. This, he suggests, was Richard's problem in 1386–7.⁴⁴ By the time Richard attempted to rectify this deficiency by retaining members of the leading local gentry into his affinity, it was too late. The implication is that the crisis was caused *because* Richard lacked an affinity, rather than because his rule had precipitated the rebellion. From the time of Richard's return to executive power in 1389, Given-Wilson argues, he tried to ensure his own security by building up support amongst the gentry through the recruitment of a magnate-style affinity. Thus, Richard was not driven by any proactive policy towards ruling. Instead, his rule was dictated by his need to react to the problems he faced in exerting his power. Although Given-Wilson admits that Richard alienated part of his new-found support network through his unholy fascination with the Cheshiremen, he argues that,

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 155–70, 178–86. Tuck's argument concerning foreign policy is discussed below, pp. 139–43.

⁴² Ibid., ch. 7, esp. pp. 224–5: 'The nobility could not make their will prevail for long if the king was determined not to co-operate, and in the end the only effective alternative was to remove the king ... the two depositions of the fourteenth century suggest not the weakness but the strength of the English medieval monarchy.' Note also that on p. 225, Tuck does draw comparisons between Richard's rule in 1397–9 and in the 1380s. For McFarlane: above, pp. 4–7.

⁴³ Given-Wilson, 'King and the Gentry', pp. 93–5, 100–2; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 264–7.

⁴⁴ Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 213–15.

overall, Richard's policy was almost successful because in 1399 members of his affinity attempted to resist Bolingbroke's invasion. They failed only because they lacked the leadership of the king himself. But like Goodman, Given-Wilson provides no real explanation for Richard's actions in 1397, other than the admission that the king's sudden change in his retaining policy to favour the Cheshiremen was 'perplexing' since the royal affinity had brought him 'considerable success' until then.⁴⁵ Taking this argument to its logical conclusion, Barron has argued that even in the period 1397–9 Richard was no worse than any other medieval king and that the 'injustices' of his rule were no more than 'the normal small change of English medieval kingship'.⁴⁶

Most recently of all, the work of Saul has tended to confirm Given-Wilson's interpretation, although he does not go as far as Barron's assertion that Richard did not deserve to be deposed. Following recent work on ideas of kingship in the fifteenth century, Saul adds an extra interpretational layer which unites the two halves of the reign by returning to an older theme in arguing that Richard developed a theory of kingship with absolutist overtones which relied heavily on the duty of the subject to obey the king at all times.⁴⁷ However, he also follows Given-Wilson in labelling Richard's introduction of the royal affinity not only as 'striking and innovative', but also as 'an intelligent and practical response to the problems raised by royal authority in the later middle ages'.⁴⁸ He argues that the concomitant accretion of landed power in the hands of Richard's closest noble allies was a means by which 'an outpost of Ricardian lordship' such as Devon could be established 'in a county where royal power had hitherto been weak' precisely because it was controlled by a member of the nobility.⁴⁹ Once more, however, Saul finds it difficult to explain Richard's actions in 1397 and falls back on a psychological perspective which had first been introduced in Steel's Freudian analysis of Richard's personality. Saul argues that, in 1397, Richard's psyche underwent a dramatic and severe change for the worse as a result of the criticism he faced

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 212–26; quotation from p. 223. For a rather different view, see J. L. Gillespie, 'Richard II's Cheshire Archers', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 125 (1974), pp. 31–3, who argues that, whilst Richard was acting like any other magnate, he was also the king and supposedly above 'factional machinations'.

⁴⁶ C. M. Barron, 'The Deposition of Richard II', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 132–6. See also the comments in a similar vein in A. J. Pollard, *Late Medieval England, 1399–1509* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 19–23. T. Jones, 'Was Richard II a Tyrant? Richard's use of the Books of Rules for Princes', in N. Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* v (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 154–8.

⁴⁷ Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 236–9; N. Saul, 'The Kingship of Richard II', in A. Goodman and J. L. Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 44–52, 55–7; Richard's ideas of kingship are discussed at greater length below, pp. 24–5, 29–31, 237–42.

⁴⁸ Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 262–9, quotation from p. 268. ⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 244.

in the January parliament of that year.⁵⁰ But, even if Richard did become mentally unstable in 1397, this does not explain why his rule attracted such criticism in 1397 in the first place. Significantly, the charges that were laid against him in 1399 were based on his methods of ruling, which may have mattered more to his subjects.⁵¹

The implication behind the arguments of Given-Wilson and Saul is that the king's executive and coercive power in the late fourteenth century was severely compromised by his inability to raise an armed force or to extend his power sufficiently into the localities. This enabled the nobility to hold Richard to ransom when it suited them. This view has been further strengthened by a separate strand of historiography, elaborated by Kaeuper and based on the assumption that England was transformed from a thirteenth-century 'law-state' to a fourteenth-century 'war-state'. This meant that the crown did not have the resources to concentrate on both upholding justice and fighting a prolonged foreign conflict. Kaeuper argues that, because the government was reliant on grants of parliamentary subsidies to fund the war, it was forced to concede to the parliamentary Commons the devolution of royal judicial power to the gentry in the localities through their role as JPs. Following Putnam's work, this process is generally thought to have been complete by 1360–1. The result of this combination of lack of governmental supervision with the increasing involvement of the local gentry in controlling their own affairs led to a perceived 'crisis' in order in the later fourteenth century.⁵²

Although neither Given-Wilson nor Saul espouses Kaeuper's work directly, the paradigm of royal devolution of power to the gentry is implicit in their arguments. Their perception that the crown had lost ground to the gentry has led them to argue that the best way for the

⁵⁰ Steel, *Richard II*, pp. 40–3, 174–5, 193; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 366–8; A. K. McHardy, 'Richard II: A Personal Portrait', in G. Dodd (ed.), *The Reign of Richard II* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 15–21, although she does begin to put Richard's downfall into a political context, pp. 27–8.

⁵¹ *RP* III, pp. 418–21.

⁵² R. W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 1–5, 125–33, 174–83, 383–7; R. W. Kaeuper, 'Law and Order in Fourteenth-Century England: The Evidence of Special Commissions of Oyer and Terminer', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 734–84, esp. pp. 781–4; B. H. Putnam (ed.), *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (London, 1938), pp. xxiv–xlviii; B. H. Putnam, 'The Transformation of the Keepers of the Peace into the Justices of the Peace, 1327–80', *TRHS*, 4th ser., 12 (1929), pp. 23–46; A. Harding, *The Law Courts of Medieval England* (London, 1973), pp. 92–5. See also G. L. Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 401–10, 514–17, although he sees the Commons as allies of the king in government. More recently, Harriss has refuted the war-state/law-state argument: G. L. Harriss, 'Political Society and the Growth of Government in Late Medieval England', *Past and Present*, 138 (1993), pp. 28–34, 56–7. See also A. Musson, 'Second "English Justinian" or Pragmatic Opportunist? A Re-Examination of the Legal Legislation of Edward III's Reign', in J. S. Bothwell (ed.), *The Age of Edward III* (York, 2001), pp. 87–8.

king to increase his coercive power was to harness the gentry's local resources through his affinity. This also had the advantage that the monarch could side-step the traditional power bases of the nobility who had rebelled against him.⁵³ This argument fits neatly into the wider context of one dominant strand of thought current in writing on the fifteenth century. Richard's tapping of the power of the gentry through his affinity has been represented by historians of the early Tudor period as the beginning of direct incursions of royal power into the localities which culminated in the 'new' rule of Edward IV and the triumph of the Tudor affinity. According to this point of view, Richard failed not because his policies represented a complete break with the norms of government, but because he was simply ahead of his time. In other words, the policy itself was unimpeachable, but the medieval polity had not yet evolved to a point where it could operate successfully.⁵⁴

During the last twenty years, however, an alternative notion of how medieval government worked, and why it sometimes failed, has been developed for the fifteenth century by Carpenter, Powell, Watts and Castor. Although these ideas have not yet been applied fully to the fourteenth century, their implications could have a profound effect on the way in which Richard II's reign is understood. The new critique argues that not only has the legacy of McFarlane's work been skewed by over-emphasis on the 'private' aspect of medieval politics, but also that this has led to a return to judgements that are more akin to the ideas of Stubbs and Plummer than to any new understanding of the period. In particular, the central role of the distribution of 'patronage' as the main factor contributing to the success or failure of the king is now being questioned.

Powell has pointed out that the word 'patronage' as conceptualised by historians was never used in the political dialectic of the later middle ages. In fact, Tuck himself admits this point when he states that criticism of Richard's direction of patronage in the 1380s was 'implicit'.⁵⁵ Of course, it is not unusual for historians to adopt modern terms as convenient

⁵³ C. Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: The Fourteenth-Century Political Community* (London, 1987), pp. 79–82, although he also acknowledges that the gentry still needed the nobility: *ibid.*, pp. 171–2; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 264–7; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 262–9; M. Bennett, *Richard II and the Revolution of 1399* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 194–5, as though he believes that Richard's retaining policy went wrong in the late 1390s; above, pp. 11–12. A similar implication can be found in: J. S. Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage: Royal Patronage, Social Mobility and Political Control in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2004).

⁵⁴ D. Starkey, 'The Age of the Household: Politics, Society and the Arts, c. 1350–c. 1550', in S. Medcalf (ed.), *The Context of English Literature: The Later Middle Ages* (London, 1981), pp. 264–74; Guy, *Tudor England*, pp. 165–73; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 265, 339–46. For Tout's similar views: above, p. 3.

⁵⁵ E. Powell, 'After "After McFarlane": The Poverty of Patronage and the Case for Constitutional History', in D. J. Clayton, R. G. Davies and P. McNiven (eds.), *Trade, Devotion and Governance* (Gloucester, 1994), pp. 4–6; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 87.

shorthand to describe a whole gamut of ideas and practices. The best example of this is the term 'bastard feudalism' itself, which was rescued from its original pejorative sense by McFarlane, and is now used to refer to the social and political system within which later medieval politics operated. But in the case of bastard feudalism, it is widely understood, if rarely openly acknowledged, that it is simply a convenient term. In the case of 'patronage', however, the term is often used as if contemporaries would have understood the concept, even though it is far from clear that they would have done so. To contemporaries of Richard II, 'patronage' meant only the bestowal of ecclesiastical livings by a patron to his clerical client. The word is never used by Richard's opponents, or by the king himself.⁵⁶ Although terms such as 'good lordship' and 'counsel' have been taken to be synonymous with complaints about patronage, recent exploration of what these phrases meant has shown that their usage was far more complex, and should not be read as a code for complaints about patronage.⁵⁷ 'Patronage' is not just a convenient term, it is also an anachronism. If the word is to be used, it should only be in its narrowest sense of the giving of grants and with the understanding that it is only a convenient descriptive term, not an explanation for a political system.

The problem with the concept of 'patronage' is not only semantic, however. Its use as an interpretational tool has also moulded historians' understanding of late medieval politics, precisely because it is an anachronism. The basic assumption on which interpretational emphasis on patronage rests is the idea that the king needed to 'buy' the loyalty and obedience of his subjects. Thus, Given-Wilson writes that before 1387 Richard had not succeeded in 'winning' the support of the gentry.⁵⁸ In other words, loyalty to a king was neither freely given nor assumed. With the emphasis on the linked themes of the devolution of royal power to the localities and the growing power and independence of the gentry in local government, this assumption has led to the idea that, in order to strengthen his position in relation to his subjects, the king needed to build up his own support base amongst them, in other words, his own 'bastard feudal' following. It has also led to a recent tendency to label 'supporters' of the king as 'royalists', which implies the existence of men

⁵⁶ For example, Arundel's criticisms in 1384: *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 69; the Appellants' propaganda in 1387: T. Favent, *Historia Mirabilis Parliamenti 1386-8*, ed. M. McKisack (Camden Miscellany 14, 1926), esp. pp. 2-10; the impeachment of de la Pole in 1386: *RP* III, p. 216; the Appeal of 1387-8, *RP* III, pp. 230-6; Richard's proclamation in 1389: *Westminster Chronicle*, pp. 391-3; Arundel's complaints in 1394: *RP* III, pp. 313-14; the Counter Appeal of 1397: *RP* III, pp. 374-9; the deposition articles: *RP* III, pp. 418-21.

⁵⁷ Powell, 'After "After McFarlane"', pp. 6, 10; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 3-9; J. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 16-39.

⁵⁸ Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 214; Powell, 'After "After McFarlane"', pp. 8-9.

Introduction

who were not the natural supporters of the king.⁵⁹ In a similar vein, Tuck was able to argue that, when Richard attempted to tackle the perceived problem of noble livery and maintenance, he was thwarted by the lords' resistance, and was driven to forming an affinity of his own:

The nobility were the real victors ... Their resistance to the effective measures against lawlessness ... to curb overmighty subjects did much to bring about the collapse of Richard's policy of law and enforcement and the growth of his belief that the military power of the nobility could be checked most effectively ... by the creation of his own armed retinue.⁶⁰

In this passage Tuck could almost be echoing Stubbs or Plummer in their condemnation of noble unruliness and contempt for the law.⁶¹ It seems that the spectre of the 'overmighty' subject has not been laid to rest in the historiography of the fourteenth century; he is simply better studied.

The implications of the work of Tuck, Given-Wilson and Saul are at odds with McFarlane's tenet that both ruler and ruled shared common goals, and were not normally in a constant state of antagonism.⁶² But a brief survey of the statements of the king's opponents in the period supports McFarlane's idea that they considered themselves to be as 'royalist' as the king's friends. Whilst the Appellants did oppose Richard's rule, and although Bolingbroke eventually usurped him, their opposition took place within the well-established political structures of the polity. As for the idea that the loyalty of either gentry or nobility needed to be bought, the careers of the Appellants before 1386–8 show very clearly that under normal circumstances they were anything but the king's enemies.⁶³ It was precisely because the nobility saw themselves as the king's natural advisers and allies that they occasionally undertook the roles of spokesmen to voice concern over the way in which the king governed. On rare occasions, such as 1386, they might even take over the running of the government temporarily, but the armed reactions of 1387–8 and 1399 were very clearly a last resort, and came in response to the king's openly aggressive and disruptive rule. It was Richard's actions in 1386–7 and 1397–9, not those of his nobility, which created the crises of the reign.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 247, 384, n. 62. The term is not a new one; Tout also uses it, e.g. Tout, *Administrative History* III, p. 331 where he describes the group in the royal chamber led by Simon Burley as 'a coherent body of thoroughgoing royalist partisans'.

⁶⁰ Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 149. For a similar conclusion, see P. R. Coss, 'Bastard Feudalism Revised', *Past and Present*, 125 (1989), pp. 54–8.

⁶¹ Above, pp. 2–3; Carpenter, 'Before and After McFarlane', pp. 182–3, 192–3.

⁶² Above, pp. 4–7. ⁶³ Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 1–15; above, pp. 11–13.

⁶⁴ McFarlane summed this up aptly: 'The king's impetuosity gave a quarrel over policies and personalities the character of a constitutional crisis'; McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings*, p. 27. The Appellants' aims and motives are examined in more detail in [Chapter 3](#), below, pp. 119–38.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

In response to the McFarlanite notion that the king and his subjects were on the same side, Given-Wilson has argued that this model cannot be sustained because there were so many areas of policy where the king and his nobility could disagree.⁶⁵ But to argue this is to misinterpret what McFarlane meant. He never suggested that there was perfect goodwill and amity between the king and his nobility on every issue of governance, but rather that they shared the same general aims.⁶⁶ Whilst they might disagree on the best means to achieve these aims, such disagreements are common to any government at any period. What was unusual about Richard's rule is that these disagreements turned into violent conflict and deposition. The financial and governmental crisis of 1386 bore a striking resemblance to that of 1376, yet in 1376 there was no violence or threats of deposition. In 1386, however, the situation deteriorated because the king behaved in a manner which threatened his subjects' lives and property.⁶⁷

New work on the fifteenth-century polity has not only focused on the problems of 'patronage'. It has also suggested a new framework which argues for the need to understand the 'private' element of medieval politics within the context of other, 'public' organs of governance. In this new model, 'patronage' as the giving of grants of land or office is seen as just one aspect of rule.⁶⁸ Whereas the patronage approach tends to dismiss statements of principle as mere disguise for ambition or self-interest, the new interpretation of politics has led to renewed interest in the political language of the period. As Watts has argued on the basis of Skinner's seminal work, it does not matter whether a political statement is made out of genuine principled belief or out of self-interest. What matters are the words and principles which were chosen, and the effects these had. Statements of political belief can be found in a range of literature, including 'mirrors for princes', petitions in parliament and political verses and songs which offered sometimes scathing criticism of contemporary government.⁶⁹ Through the study of these types of literature, in conjunction with the actual operation of governance, it has

⁶⁵ C. Given-Wilson, 'Richard II and the Higher Nobility', in Goodman and Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, pp. 127–8.

⁶⁶ McFarlane, *Nobility*, pp. 119–20, esp. his comment that the nobility often had 'very definite though rarely unanimous views on policy'.

⁶⁷ Below, pp. 119–24.

⁶⁸ Powell, 'After "After McFarlane"', pp. 11–13; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 347–60; Carpenter, 'Before and After McFarlane', pp. 195–8; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 97–8.

⁶⁹ Q. R. D. Skinner, 'The Principles and Practice of Opposition: The Case of Bolingbroke versus Walpole', in N. McKendrick (ed.), *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J. H. Plumb* (London, 1974), pp. 93–128; Powell, 'After "After McFarlane"', pp. 10–11; Carpenter, 'Before and After McFarlane', p. 196. The argument is most fully extended and used by Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 1–9 and chs. 2 and 3.

Introduction

been possible to begin to recreate the framework of often unspoken conventions and rules which governed the day-to-day functioning of the medieval polity.⁷⁰ Often these conventions only became apparent when they were ignored or transgressed; however, such moments of political crisis and the reaction they provoked are invaluable for understanding what behaviour was acceptable as the norm in politics and what was beyond the political pale.

This research on the fifteenth-century polity has emphasised the crucial role of the king in the defence of the realm from enemy incursions and in the maintenance of domestic law and order, to which he was bound by his coronation oath. It was he who wielded ultimate executive power through the exercise of his personal will. In theory, this power had to be absolute because it was the only means by which the monarch could guarantee his ability to fulfil these functions on his subjects' behalf.⁷¹ As Harriss has pointed out, since the king ruled, and held the reins of power in his own hands, it does not make sense to portray either parliament or the officers of state as restraints on his will which needed to be captured by the king. The king was ultimately in charge of all aspects of governance.⁷² In practice, however, the monarch also acted as the representative of the common weal, and was supposed to choose his policies and temper his rule according to the needs of his subjects. A king who ruled entirely for his own self-interest was labelled a tyrant.⁷³ In order to rule in his subjects' best interests, the king needed to listen to their requests and grievances; he could also take advice from his councillors, although he was not bound to follow it. The greatest of his subjects, the nobility, saw themselves as the natural advisers of the monarch, even though they had no right to force their counsel on him or to give advice contrary to the common good. As Watts points out, when complaints were made concerning royal misrule, they often focused either on the poor quality of counsel the king was receiving, or on the fact that he appeared to be ignoring good advice. For a ruler to become completely oblivious to or actively antagonistic towards his subjects' needs or concerns was to place his crown in peril.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 351–9. Bennett's recent study of the concerns of the political classes in 1399 has gone some way to doing this for the reign of Richard II: M. J. Bennett, 'Henry of Bolingbroke and the Revolution of 1399', in G. Dodd and D. Biggs (eds.), *Henry IV: The Establishment of the Regime, 1399–1406* (York, 2003), pp. 10–11, 17–18, 24.

⁷¹ E. Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society: Criminal Justice in the Reign of Henry V* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 25–38; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 351–4; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 21–2, 27–31, 57–61, 74–9.

⁷² Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance*, pp. 186–207; above, pp. 2–3.

⁷³ Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', pp. 1–2; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 25–31, 61–3, 76–80.

⁷⁴ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 349–51; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 25–31; Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, pp. 74–80.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

Whilst fifteenth-century historians have accepted that the nobility had an important role to play as the king's advisers, the blossoming of local studies has led to considerable disagreement concerning the local function of the magnates, and especially their relationship with the local gentry. Some studies, such as the work of Wright and Payling on the gentry of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, have argued that the gentry were essentially independent, either because there was no dominant magnate in the county or because the combined landed power of the gentry outweighed that of the regional noble.⁷⁵ From this argument has grown the assumption that the relationship between magnates and gentry tended towards antagonism which was voiced in the petitions of the parliamentary Commons against noble abuses of the judicial system.⁷⁶ By contrast, other studies, such as those for Warwickshire and Devon, have shown that a magnate could, and did, dominate local politics on a county-wide basis.⁷⁷ These apparently disparate findings have been reconciled by Carpenter, who has shown that, even in counties where there appeared to be no resident magnate, vertical structures often prevailed over horizontal ones. Counties which seemed to lack magnate leadership were often those dominated by the absentee royal Duchy of Lancaster or other crown estates. Significantly, Carpenter has shown that the Duchy was atypical both in the extent of its estates and in the fact that, from 1399, it belonged to the crown, which meant that the king was also the local magnate. Where there was a lack of resident nobility, gentry might act as power brokers, such as the Stanleys in Cheshire, or several lesser nobles might act together. Thus, Carpenter has argued that, even though in practice there were considerable variations in the power structures of the localities, the hierarchical model was the dominant one, in which the

⁷⁵ For example, S. M. Wright, *The Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century* (Derbyshire Record Society 8, 1983), pp. 62–3, 65–6, 127, 143–4; S. J. Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England: The Greater Gentry of Nottinghamshire* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 1–18, 99–100, 104–8, 219; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 127–41 (with reservations); most recently, Harriss has suggested that both vertical and horizontal ties were important: Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, pp. 187–206, esp. 205–6.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England*, pp. 104–5, 106–8, and, to some extent, Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, pp. 65–6, 127, 143–4, who argues that noble interference could actually inflame gentry disputes. For the argument that the Commons' petitions represented gentry disillusionment with noble abuses of the judicial system see R. L. Storey, 'Liveries and Commissions of the Peace, 1388–90', in du Boulay and Barron (eds.), *Reign of Richard II*, esp. p. 139; N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 61, 101–2; J. M. W. Bean, *From Lord to Patron: Lordship in Late Medieval England* (Manchester, 1989), pp. 201–5, although he argues that Richard used these complaints to increase his own authority.

⁷⁷ M. Cherry, 'The Courtenay Earls of Devon: The Formation and Disintegration of a Late-Medieval Aristocratic Affinity', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), pp. 72–80; M. C. Carpenter, 'The Beauchamp Affinity: A Study of Bastard Feudalism at Work', *EHR*, 95 (1980), pp. 517–18; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 287–91.

Introduction

gentry looked to the magnates and the magnates looked to the king for protection and good governance. Just as McFarlane had shown that the king and nobility were on the same side, so the magnates and gentry had the same aims: protection of their landed property on which their local power was founded.⁷⁸

As has been shown by historians of the fifteenth-century localities, whilst the king lacked a police force and standing army, both magnates and gentry were an integral part of medieval governance because their land gave them the ability to raise an armed force from their tenants to enforce the king's rule if this became necessary. It was this 'private' ability which always lay behind the process of local enforcement, and which enabled magnates and gentry to uphold the more 'public' aspects of local governance, such as the administration of the judicial system.⁷⁹ Within the main administrative unit of the county, it was the nobility who were most likely to be individually the dominant landed power, not the gentry. In a locality where a magnate's lands were most concentrated he would possess the necessary on-the-spot force to ensure his rule would be effective.⁸⁰ The gentry, meanwhile, as lesser landlords, provided a large amount of the potential local force but looked to the regional magnate for support and protection. Because land was the basis of power, there was considerable competition both to obtain and keep it. The situation was exacerbated by the relative paucity of land with lordship available for purchase and the growing demand for landed estates amongst the new class of rising lay professionals, particularly those expert in the law.⁸¹ Membership of a noble affinity could offer protection of land both through the contacts it brought with other members of the gentry and also because the lord was able to bring his greater landed resources and power to bear on behalf of his men. This could be done through a variety of methods: through guaranteeing his followers' purchases and land settlements; through the members of his affinity who held local office; through the 'labouring' of justices and jurors; through the arrangement

⁷⁸ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 288; M. C. Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England', *JBS*, 33 (1994), pp. 356–63. For the parallels between the practice of magnate and royal lordship, see Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 63–74.

⁷⁹ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 282–4, 347–50.

⁸⁰ Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 363–5. Payling has used 'simple mathematics' to argue that the gentry en masse were more influential than any one regional noble because they held more land between them. This assumes that the gentry would always act collectively rather than individually, which was unlikely to happen, given the competition for land: Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England*, pp. 1–18.

⁸¹ J. R. Maddicott, *Law and Lordship: Royal Justices as Retainers in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England* (Past and Present Supplement 4, Oxford 1978), pp. 10–25; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 119–20, 124–5, 285, 287–8.

of arbitrements and love days; and, occasionally, through a show of actual physical force.⁸²

Although some of these practices would now be labelled corrupt, the structure of power in the later middle ages made a certain amount of law-bending inevitable. Because power was based on land, the king was reliant on his nobility and gentry to provide the manpower and influence to enable governance to function locally. This did not mean, however, that the king was at the mercy of his subjects, or that the localities were independent of royal rule. Whilst any sensible monarch would ensure that effective local rule was carried out by appointing the dominant lord and his affinity to local office as conduits of royal power, this did not mean that they could act as they pleased. The argument that local self-regulation led to widespread disregard for the legal system has been based on the apparently endless litany of local disputes and complaints by the parliamentary Commons concerning noble abuses of power.⁸³ However, new work on the relationship between the public processes of the law and the more private aspects of dispute resolution has cast doubt on the picture of inherently disordered localities. By their very nature, legal records show only the violent side of any society. But, as the work of Carpenter, Powell and Maddern has shown, they must be read within the wider context of society's attitudes to the law.⁸⁴ A suit could be brought in order to force the defendant to arbitration, which used the private structures of local power in order to reach a settlement agreeable to both sides.⁸⁵ As Carpenter has argued, since the king's law was a recent intruder into the localities, and whilst the king lacked a police force to enforce justice, the judicial system remained reliant on the older structures of private power. This allowed magnates and gentry to protect their property by a variety of means which were not always strictly legal. At the same time, the king's law guaranteed that they could do this only within accepted, if unspoken, limitations. A lord who used his power to throw his weight around locally, or whose rule excluded a significant proportion of local society, could create discontent and disorder locally.⁸⁶ The king's role as the ultimate guarantor of the judicial system was to act

⁸² Carpenter, 'Beauchamp Affinity', p. 525; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 354–9.

⁸³ For this argument: above, pp. 12–13.

⁸⁴ M. C. Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners in Late-Medieval England', *Law and History Review*, 1 (1983), pp. 225–6; Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, ch. 1; P. C. Maddern, *Violence and Social Order: East Anglia 1422–1442* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1–26. See also Harriss, 'Political Society and the Growth of Government', pp. 28–34, 56–7.

⁸⁵ E. Powell, 'Arbitration and the Law in the Late Medieval Ages', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 33 (1983), pp. 49–63; Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 93–107. See also Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 292–7.

⁸⁶ Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners', pp. 225–6; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 358–9, 621–6, 629–30.

Introduction

as the final resort for complaint concerning such local misrule. He also possessed the authority to rectify the situation through direct local intervention, although he, too, had to be careful of how he used his powers, since intrusive royal interference, backed by the untrammelled authority of the monarch, could damage the mutually co-operative balance which allowed the polity to function.⁸⁷

Moreover, since land was the basis of the private power which in turn upheld the king's public authority, the most vital concern of the king's subjects, and therefore of the king himself as the representative of the common good, was that the laws of the realm which protected landed property were respected and upheld.⁸⁸ As the ultimate fount of the common law and the wielder of executive power, only the king could do this. At the same time, he also had to make sure that conditions prevailed in which his subjects could carry out governance in his name and ensure the safety of their property. As Powell has shown, Henry V was particularly successful in reasserting order because he stamped out unacceptable behaviour through judicial process. He combined this with the equally necessary quality of mercy, which allowed the perpetrators, whom he did not wish to alienate, a chance to redeem themselves, whilst also putting pressure on disputants to settle their conflicts by arbitration. In contrast, Henry VI failed to assert his will at all. As a result, there was no ultimate authority to which disputants could appeal, and no means of settlement.⁸⁹ This did not mean that the king had *carte blanche* to manipulate legal processes as he desired. Magna Carta had enshrined the principle that the king was not above the law. Like the nobility in their rule of the localities, the king had to understand the difference between using his powers to intervene legitimately in the judicial system and using them in a way which actually threatened his subjects' lands and rights. In other words, the king had to know when to assert his authority, how far it could be pushed and when to stop.⁹⁰

This new conceptual framework which emphasises both public and private aspects of power and governance runs against the recent emphasis on the role and necessity of the royal affinity in fifteenth-century politics. We have noted the work of Given-Wilson, which has emphasised the lack of coercive power of the crown, exacerbated by the perceived devolution of control of government from the crown to the localities. As a

⁸⁷ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 30–8; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 98–100; see also: M. C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge, 1997), esp. ch. 3.

⁸⁸ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 353–4.

⁸⁹ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 208–40; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 176–9, 202–4.

⁹⁰ Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners', pp. 209–11; Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 29–38; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 16–17, 98–100; Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, pp. 6–13.

result, the growth of the royal affinity, first initiated under Richard II and later adopted by the Tudors, has been seen as central to the development of royal power in the search for 'better' rule of the localities.⁹¹ Carpenter had already challenged this by suggesting that the resurgence of the monarchy in the late fifteenth century was intrinsically linked to a breakdown in the symbiotic relationship between the nobility and the gentry which came about as a result of years of civil war. The position of the nobility within the polity tended to force them to take sides, whilst the scale and wide geographical distribution of their resources made them less vulnerable to the effects of damage to their property caused by national and local conflict. The gentry, however, had fewer resources so they could less easily survive local disorder, but at the same time it was easier for them to remain neutral. As noble attention was diverted by national politics, so the nobles had less time and inclination to manage their local affairs. As a result, the gentry were forced into a position in which they had to become increasingly self-reliant, but were also increasingly likely to avoid following the nobility into rebellion. In the late 1470s, Edward IV began to exploit the gentry's new-found role with a form of government which did indeed involve more direct reliance on the gentry, although he still used his magnates, albeit in a different way. But importantly Carpenter argues that this change was neither inevitable nor desired in the earlier fifteenth century. It was only the serious and prolonged nature of the crisis precipitated by Henry VI's disastrous rule which produced these developments. The emergence of the royal affinity was thus a symptom, not a cause, of the changing nature of the polity. Above all, as much of the recent research on the fifteenth century has made clear, the royal affinity was not a logical necessity to effective royal rule.⁹²

If this view of the factors governing the fundamental changes in the medieval polity during the fifteenth century has a general significance for any understanding of the place of the Ricardian affinity in the late medieval polity, then the work of Castor on the Lancastrian royal affinity has a direct and very relevant part to play in an analysis of politics under Richard II.⁹³ Castor's research on the role of the royal affinity under the Lancastrian kings has challenged the two basic assumptions that it enhanced royal control of the localities, and that it was a logical extension of the policy initiated by Richard. Rather, she has demonstrated that the royal affinity did not produce better royal governance. In fact, the presence of royal retainers in the localities created serious local disturbances

⁹¹ Above, pp. 10–13.

⁹² Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 478–86, 518–47, 633–42.

⁹³ For what follows, see H. Castor, *The King, the Crown, and the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power, 1399–1461* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 4–18.

Introduction

under Henry IV which were only brought under control by the stern measures of Henry V. She argues that because the king was perceived both as the fount of justice and as the ultimate arbiter of disputes, he could not also act as the private lord of an affinity. The duty of a magnate was to protect the interests and property of his affinity; to do this, he had to be both able and willing to bend the law. The duty of the king was to act as the ultimate guarantor that the law could only be manipulated to an acceptable extent. If a lord failed to act within reasonable bounds and so created local tensions, then the king could step in to impose a settlement. But if the king himself was also acting as the lord of an affinity, his men had the advantage of the support of untrammelled royal power. Their opponents, meanwhile, lost their source of ultimate redress. When Henry IV came to the throne, his possession of a ready-made royal affinity in his Lancastrian following has been seen as the epitome of the magnate-style affinity that Richard had been trying to create.⁹⁴ But, as Castor has pointed out, Henry's accession was accidental, and, although he certainly used his affinity, he did so more because of the perilous position in which he found himself as a usurper of the throne, than as a natural progression from Richard's policies. Furthermore, Castor has shown that in the north midlands Henry relied on his affinity to such an extent that members of the local gentry who were not royal retainers were excluded both from governance and from redress. As a result, they turned to violence as a means of self-help, and the situation in the region rapidly spiralled out of control.⁹⁵

How, then, can this alternative analytical framework be applied to late fourteenth-century politics? To begin with, it is clear that the dichotomy between the interpretations of the polity by Tuck, Given-Wilson and Saul, on the one hand, and Carpenter, Watts, Powell and Castor, on the other, needs to be resolved. As we have seen, there are serious problems with the interpretation of Richard's reign as it now stands. The framework imposed by Stubbs and Tout has been lost and replaced only in part by a patronage-driven one, which raises more questions than it answers. Was Richard really at the mercy of his subjects? Why did he feel the need to build up support for himself and what was he hoping to achieve? Could such a policy ever be viable? In order to answer these questions, we need to consider the political and social parameters within which Richard's kingship and his subjects' reactions operated, many of which appear to be very similar to those described for the fifteenth century.

⁹⁴ Saul, *Richard II*, p. 440.

⁹⁵ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 209–16; Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*, pp. 205–24; Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, pp. 28–9.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

Because the patronage approach has been so pre-eminent in interpretations of Richard's rule, little attention has been paid either to the structures of power or to the role of ideas and rhetoric under Richard. As a result, little is known about how the late fourteenth-century polity actually worked or was expected to work.⁹⁶ As has been indicated, several modern historians have argued that either throughout his reign or at various times Richard attempted to rule in an 'absolutist' fashion. However, they have tended to assume that he needed to, an assumption that the work of fifteenth-century historians suggests is faulty. Jones' early attempt to conceive of Richard's rule in terms of a consistent policy of absolutism has a fundamental flaw because he assumed that the king was in a position of weakness.⁹⁷ Taking a rather similar point of view, Saul has argued that Richard had high ideas concerning the role of the king which were characterised by his emphasis on the obedience of his subjects. He argues that even if Richard's policy in the 1390s of moving his subjects from preoccupation with war to focusing on their devotion to the king was misconceived, something was needed to replace the 'war state' once he had decided on peace.⁹⁸ Bennett agrees with this notion and suggests that Richard was attempting to reassert the royal authority which had been subverted earlier in the century, whilst the recent work of Fletcher takes a different line, emphasising the links made in the political dialectic of the period between 'manhood', 'youth' and tyrannical indiscretion.⁹⁹ Walker, meanwhile, has suggested that Richard's ideas on kingship were traditional rather than ground-breaking; it was the way in which he attempted to implement them in 1397–9 that caused the final crisis of the reign.¹⁰⁰ This may be true, but it does not answer the question of whether Richard's attitudes to rule were compatible with the operation of the medieval polity. The most significant work on the subject remains Barron's important early article on the tyranny, which shows it was Richard's determination to ignore his role as the upholder of the law and to ride roughshod over his subjects' property rights that made his downfall inevitable. This depiction of the underlying reasons for Richard's downfall fits perfectly with the more recent work on the relationship between king, law and land in the fifteenth century.¹⁰¹ Although

⁹⁶ Walker's study of John of Gaunt is almost unique in raising these questions: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 117–127, 235–61. See above, pp. 13–17, for the problems raised by patronage in the interpretation of rhetoric, propaganda and ideals.

⁹⁷ Above, pp. 10–13. ⁹⁸ Saul, *Richard II*, p. 439.

⁹⁹ Above, p. 6, n. 26 Bennett, *Revolution of 1399*, pp. 54–5, 194–8; Fletcher, *Richard II*, pp. 1–24, 275–80.

¹⁰⁰ S. K. Walker, 'Richard II's Views on Kingship', in R. E. Archer and S. K. Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays Presented to Gerald Harriss* (London, 1995), pp. 51–60, 62–3. Walker also notes Richard's emphasis on obedience: *ibid.*, pp. 51–3.

¹⁰¹ Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', esp. pp. 1–2, 17–18; above, pp. 18–22.

Introduction

Barron's work concentrates only on the last two years of Richard's reign, it may also have significance in the wider context of Richard's attitude towards kingship. If Richard's attitude towards the law and property was so cavalier in 1397–9, is it possible that his entire personal rule was based on his fundamental misconception of his role as king? Although it is impossible to know for certain what Richard actually thought, much information about his attitude towards kingship can be gleaned from placing his policies within the context of a constitutional and ideological framework. It is likely, however, that ideas about kingship and governance very similar to those of the fifteenth century were in operation under Richard II. If this premise is accepted as an initial starting point for an exploration of the polity in the later fourteenth century, then it should be possible to provide a framework within which an analysis of Richard's rule as a whole can be understood.

We now need to ask the question, how did local government actually work in the late fourteenth century and what might be the impact of the rule of a king such as Richard II upon it? The appointment of local officers was a delicate matter. The king had to take into account both his own need to ensure good order in the realm and that of his nobility and gentry to protect their landed property by methods which sometimes broke the strict letter of the law. Since the king relied on his more powerful subjects to uphold his authority in the localities through their landed power, it was sensible for him to appoint them, precisely because they had the on-the-spot influence to ensure his rule was effective. In other words, under normal circumstances, the king's appointments reflected the existing balance of power in a locality by including either an active local magnate or members of his affinity. Similarly, the system would only work if the leading members of the locality kept their manipulation of the system within reasonable limits and the officials themselves behaved in a manner which did not bring the common law, and thus the king, into disrepute.¹⁰² Since the protection of the land which was the basis of their power was fundamental to the needs of both the nobility and gentry, it was vital that they were able to influence those officers who possessed judicial powers in order to 'bend' the law to their advantage or to prevent them bending it for others.¹⁰³ The most important officer in terms of his ability to influence legal procedure was the sheriff, whose job it was to administer the royal writs without which legal proceedings could not continue. Significantly for the geo-politics of the West Midlands, in Worcestershire the hereditary shrievalty was held by the earls of Warwick, whilst the shrievalty of Warwickshire was shared with

¹⁰² Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 347–60. ¹⁰³ Above, pp. 19–21.

Leicestershire. The escheator's duties were less judicial in their nature, but he was still responsible for inquiries regarding property which might escheat to the king, and for deciding who was named as heir to a property. Finally, there were the occasional appointments to commissions of oyer and terminer and inquiry. These could take two forms, special and general. Special commissions were normally issued at the petition of an individual, who was sometimes allowed to nominate the commissioners. These commissions could play a crucial part in harassing an opponent in a law suit. Conversely, general commissions (sometimes called trailbaston) were initiated by the government, and often had sweeping powers to inquire into serious local disorder. The hey-day of the general commissions had been in the first half of the fourteenth century; nevertheless, they remained a potent, and feared, tool.¹⁰⁴

In one significant area, however, the late fourteenth-century polity may still have been rather different from that of the fifteenth century. A crucial factor in delineating the structure and nature of the polity in the fourteenth century, and thus the respective roles of king, nobles and gentry, is the extent to which royal judicial power had been delegated to the localities. As we have already seen, the law-state/war-state argument has played a vital role in the argument for a weakened king and powerful gentry, the 'triumph' of the JPs and the resultant crisis in order. Much of this argument relies on the evidence of the rising volume of cases in the courts coupled with a growing tide of complaint against local abuses of the legal system, which cannot be taken entirely at face value.¹⁰⁵ One important question which this study will consider is whether local disorder in the period may have been the result of Richard's misuse of royal power rather than his inability to control his subjects.¹⁰⁶

In addition, recent work by Walker, Powell, and Musson and Ormrod on the king's role in the judicial system has begun to question the assumption that any substantial devolution of royal power to the localities had already taken place before the last decades of the fourteenth century. Experimentation with their determining powers and the personnel on the quorum continued into the 1390s. The most obvious example of this

¹⁰⁴ The sheriff's ability to delay the serving of writs and to empanel juries favourable to one of the parties was particularly useful in local disputes: H. Jewell, *English Local Administration in the Middle Ages* (Newton Abbot, 1972), pp. 36–40, 186–90; J. G. Bellamy, *Bastard Feudalism and the Law* (London, 1989), pp. 10–17; Powell, *Kingship, Law, and Society*, pp. 12–1, 60–1; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 263–5; Kaeuper, 'Law and Order in Fourteenth-Century England', pp. 742–81; R. Gorski, *The Fourteenth-Century Sheriff: English Local Administration in the Late Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 3–4.

¹⁰⁵ Above, pp. 12–13; quotation from Kaeuper, 'Law and Order in Fourteenth-Century England', p. 782; for the rhetoric of these complaints, see Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners', pp. 225–6.

¹⁰⁶ Discussed in greater length below, pp. 167–85, 208–21.

Introduction

was the withdrawal of determining powers between 1382 and 1389.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, far from conceding his judicial power to the localities, Edward III remained firmly in control of justice through the operation of King's Bench, especially in its role as a superior eyre.¹⁰⁸ It is becoming apparent from this new research that historians have been perhaps too ready to extrapolate backwards from the evidence of the activities of the JPs in the fifteenth century. In particular, it appears that it should not be assumed that the county benches were as yet fully politicised in the sense that members of the leading gentry would automatically expect to be appointed JP.¹⁰⁹ This may have been due to the fact that it was not yet apparent that the JPs were a central part of the judicial system insofar as it affected landowners. Nevertheless, it is also clear that important developments were taking place in the role of the JPs in the later fourteenth century, but how and why did these happen and when exactly did they occur? Although the justices of the peace did gain powers of determination during the fourteenth century, it is now becoming less certain that their development was complete by the 1360s, or that they were as free from royal control as has been argued. The work of Powell on the early fifteenth-century judicial system has demonstrated that the peace commissions operated in tandem with the centrally appointed assize justices (who were also on the quorum), rather than in opposition to them.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, the work of Walker and Musson and Ormrod on the JPs themselves suggests that the county benches in the late fourteenth and even the early fifteenth centuries represented local political society much less than had been supposed.¹¹¹ Combined with Powell's work on the continuing impact until 1414 of central royal justice through

¹⁰⁷ S. K. Walker, 'Yorkshire Justices of the Peace, 1389–1413', *EHR*, 108 (1993), 281–313; A. Musson and W. M. Ormrod, *The Evolution of English Justice: Law, Politics and Society in the Fourteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 51–89. Both these works argue that the king's ability to influence the activities of the JPs through the quorum allowed him to retain and strengthen his control over local justice. The current state of research on this topic is summed up in: M. C. Carpenter, 'War, Government and Governance in England in the Later Middle Ages', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century VII: Conflicts, Consequences and the Crown in the Late Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 19–20. For the JPs in the 1380s, see below, pp. 110–15.

¹⁰⁸ Powell, *Kingship, Law, and Society*, pp. 14–15; Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 18–19. For the role of the superior eyre under Richard II, below, pp. 125–9.

¹⁰⁹ But see the comments of Carpenter that it was not until the later fifteenth century that the greater gentry began to expect to be appointed to the commission, a process that did not reach completion until the rule of the Tudors: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 267–72, 340–1.

¹¹⁰ E. Powell, 'The Administration of Criminal Justice in Late Medieval England: Peace Sessions and Assizes' in R. Eales and D. Sullivan (eds.), *The Political Context of Law: Proceedings of the Seventh British Legal History Conference* (London, 1987), pp. 49–60; Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 55–60.

¹¹¹ Walker, 'Yorkshire Justices of the Peace', pp. 282–3, 305–11; Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 42–74.

the superior eyre and judicial commissions, the whole notion that the king had devolved judicial power to the localities by Richard's reign needs to be reassessed.¹¹² Clearly, this has implications for the necessity or otherwise of a royal affinity, which, together with the fluctuating role of the JPs, will form an important theme of this book, and will be discussed more fully in the context of the politics of the West Midlands.

If work on the fourteenth-century JPs has exaggerated the extent of devolution and local control until very recently, what are we to make of the local studies for this period contrary to much work on the fifteenth century but in accord with some of the fifteenth-century studies that suggest that the gentry's cumulative landed and judicial powers meant that they needed the nobility less than the nobility needed them, and that their local influence was therefore ripe for tapping by the king? This argument has been particularly apparent in the local studies of the period by Astill, Bennett, Saul and, to some extent, in that of Walker.¹¹³ Meanwhile, other studies, such as Cherry's work on the Courtenay earls of Devon, seem to suggest that the hierarchical model of power which has already been applied to the fifteenth century may not be equally valid for the latter part of the fourteenth.¹¹⁴ How can such differences be reconciled? As we have seen, the two major planks of the argument concerning the rise of the gentry and the power and control of the nobility can both be challenged. Rather, it may be possible to suppose that the nobility were no less dominant or the gentry any more independent in the late fourteenth century than in the fifteenth century. In Bennett's Cheshire, where the king was the dominant lord, and in the localities described by Walker and Astill which were dominated by the Lancastrian estates, two abnormal power structures were functioning, which may well have affected methods of governance and control. But should this unusual set of circumstances be taken to mean that the gentry were independent from the nobility or more influential in local politics? Indeed, should we assume that every locality was ruled in exactly the same way, or that, rather, different local conditions might dictate the relative importance of the role of officers such as the JPs? As Carpenter has shown, the earls of Warwick

¹¹² Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 63–4, 173–94.

¹¹³ G. G. Astill, 'The Medieval Gentry: A Study in Leicestershire Society, 1350–99' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Birmingham, 1977), pp. 207–30; Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, pp. 60–82 and esp. pp. 102–3; M. J. Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 5–40; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 127–41, although he also shows that in other regions, such as Lancashire, the duke's influence was dominant: *ibid.*, pp. 141–81.

¹¹⁴ Cherry, 'Courtenay Earls of Devon', pp. 72–80; see also C. J. Tyldesley, 'The Crown and the Local Communities in Devon and Cornwall, 1377–1422' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Exeter, 1978), pp. 14–16.

Introduction

were the dominant force in early fifteenth-century Warwickshire and Worcestershire. We might posit, therefore, that conditions were likely to have been little different under Thomas Beauchamp II.¹¹⁵

It is arguable that, in many ways, the polity of Ricardian England was little different from that of the first half of the fifteenth century. The king ruled, aided by his nobility, who acted as mediators of royal power between the centre and localities. The gentry, meanwhile, looked to the nobility for aid and protection of their lands. If there was a difference, it was that the king's direct judicial control over the localities remained much stronger into the later fourteenth century than has been supposed, and this may have implications for the rule of the nobility. How, then, did Richard's attitude towards kingship shape his rule of the localities? If we are to accept that Richard was not in a position of weakness regarding his subjects, a very different picture of his rule and attitudes may begin to emerge. For example, the suggestion by both Tuck and Goodman that Richard attempted in the 1380s to build up his own friends in regions already dominated by active magnates may be correct, but it is important to ask why the king thought it was necessary to secure such 'loyalty' in the first place when, before 1387, there was nothing to suggest in the activities of even his most strident critics that they planned to use the last resort of armed force against his rule.¹¹⁶ Similarly, is it possible that Richard's apparent emphasis on obedience was also part of a novel attitude towards his rule? As king, Richard had theoretically absolute power and his subjects naturally looked to him as the source of good order and governance. They were not naturally predisposed to disobey him, and the fact that he thought they might suggests an inbuilt mistrust towards the men who were his advisers, companions and agents of his rule.¹¹⁷ As Gillingham puts it, Richard appears to have 'lived in England as though he were in enemy country'.¹¹⁸ Did Richard's attitude towards kingship and his apparent distrust of his subjects play a part in his policies, which led, ultimately, to his downfall?

Richard's attempts to win over the gentry by recruiting a royal affinity in the 1390s also need to be reassessed. This policy has been seen as a sensible idea, both in the context of both Richard's rule in particular and also in the structure of medieval politics in general, but two important questions need to be asked: what were the effects of such a policy,

¹¹⁵ Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 356–65. Her point is confirmed by Astill's work, which shows, despite itself, that Gaunt was influential in Leicestershire: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 147–53, 165–7, 210–20. For the fifteenth century, above, pp. 18–22.

¹¹⁶ Above, pp. 7–10; below, pp. 124–34. ¹¹⁷ Above, pp. 18–25.

¹¹⁸ J. B. Gillingham, 'Crisis or Continuity? The Structure of Royal Authority in England, 1369–1422', in R. Schneider (ed.), *Das Spätmittelalterliche Königtum im Europäischen Vergleich* (Sigmaringen, 1987), p. 65.

and did Richard even need to implement it in order to rule successfully? The problems inherent in the Lancastrian royal affinity in the fifteenth century have already been discussed. It has also been shown that the emergence of the royal affinity as the dominant power in the later fifteenth century was not a logical progression in the royal search for control.¹¹⁹ In the light of these arguments, and given the possible strength of magnate–gentry ties in the later fourteenth century, it is not clear that Richard’s attempts to form a royal affinity should be seen as a logical solution to his perceived problems of enforcement or as a viable proposition. If, as Castor has shown, the consequence of Henry’s affinity in the localities was disorder and violence, is it possible that the intrusion of Richard’s affinity could have had similar effects? Tantalisingly, research by Walker, Tyldesley and Cherry has suggested not only that the royal affinity was a destabilising influence locally but also that Richard was deliberately promoting it as an alternative to the established magnates.¹²⁰ Richard’s intentions and the effects of his policy in the West Midlands will be discussed at length in [Chapters 4](#) and [5](#), but it is already certain that Tuck’s statement that Richard ‘was merely behaving like an ordinary magnate’ in building up an affinity needs reassessment.¹²¹ We need to know what Richard was trying to do in the localities and, following the recent fifteenth-century studies and Walker’s work on John of Gaunt, what the geo-political implications were.

The last question which needs serious consideration in any analysis of Richard’s reign is the extent to which he was responsible for his own downfall. In particular, can Barron’s and Given-Wilson’s argument that he was deposed because he was unlucky and politically naïve, rather than because his rule represented a serious threat to his subjects’ lives and property, be sustained?¹²² This begins to seem doubtful when Richard’s fall is considered within the wider contemporary attitudes towards kingship. His deposition was only the second occasion on which a monarch had been removed from power. When deposition was first contemplated in 1387, the Appellants were confronted with the fact that Richard had no son and no other heir with whom he could be replaced and who would be acceptable to all. This was a serious impediment to any attempt to depose him. Yet in 1399 there was a considerable body of opinion willing to support just such a decision, despite its consequences.¹²³ If deposition

¹¹⁹ Above, pp. 22–3.

¹²⁰ Tyldesley, ‘Crown and Local Communities’, pp. 157–80; Cherry, ‘Courtenay Earls of Devon’, pp. 89–92; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 174–9, 222–32; below, pp. 166–7.

¹²¹ Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 180. ¹²² Above, pp. 14–15.

¹²³ M.V. Clarke, *Fourteenth Century Studies* (Oxford, 1937), pp. 91–5; Bennett, ‘Henry of Bolingbroke and the Revolution of 1399’, pp. 10–11, 17–18.

Introduction

was viewed as a last resort rather than a convenient method of getting rid of an unpopular king, then it follows that Richard's rule was perceived to be a very real threat to the realm. Did this threat come from Richard's espousal of a coherent and continuous policy to impose a certain type of rule on his subjects throughout his adult reign? In other words, should we see the 1380s and 1390s as a continuum rather than as two very different decades, separated by the events of 1386–9?

Local studies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, whilst intrinsically valuable, have been an incisive tool for throwing fresh light on national politics.¹²⁴ They can reveal the complex interrelationship between the local power of the nobility, local politics and national events, which, in the light of the dramatic but often hard-to-interpret events of the later fourteenth century, make any local study of this period potentially valuable. The obvious choice for such a study is one of those nobles who opposed Richard; Thomas Beauchamp, as the oldest, and most experienced of these men, is my choice. This book will attempt to answer some of these questions by a close analysis of the political structure of the West Midlands and Thomas Beauchamp's place within them. It will examine how Richard's rule affected both the earl's position and the structure of local politics in the West Midlands. It should be possible to say something about what Richard's attitudes and policies were, and how and whether they were compatible with the medieval polity. By beginning in 1369, the year of his inheritance of the lands and title of earl, a longer perspective on the local circumstances and of Warwick's attitudes and activities before Richard's accession can be established. In the first chapter, the geo-political structures of the West Midlands will be surveyed. The next four chapters are in chronological form; each will include a detailed survey of local politics and Warwick's rule, within the broader context of national events. Combined with this chronological structure, there will also be thematic treatment of the most important issues in the period, such as the development and role of the JPs, the growth and impact of the royal affinity, and the important question of whether Richard had a consistent policy towards his domestic rule. In this way, it is the intention to present a picture of Richard's rule, drawn from a local perspective, but which takes cognisance of the entire structure of the late fourteenth-century body politic.

¹²⁴ For example: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 437–86 (Warwickshire under the Kingmaker), Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 209–32 (events in the north midlands); Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*, pp. 82–128 (role of the duke of Suffolk).

THE GEO-POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

For as long as the ownership of land equated to local power, the king relied upon the nobility to act as his representatives and mediators of his will in the shires. The nobility, meanwhile, needed to be able to exert sufficient control locally, both to ensure governance could be carried out and to protect and advance the interests of their affinities. These activities were conducted within and conditioned by ancient administrative units of local government, the most important of which were the counties. The key local offices of sheriff, escheator, JP and MP were all appointed or elected to act on a county-wide basis. Thus, as Carpenter has argued, in order to exert sufficient control over local politics, a magnate needed to be able to extend his influence over the whole county.¹ In Worcestershire, the earl of Warwick had a natural advantage through his tenure of the hereditary shrievalty of the county, but in Warwickshire he was at a disadvantage because both the shrievalty and the escheatorship were held jointly with Leicestershire, which meant that Warwickshire politics could be more easily influenced from beyond the county boundaries.²

The medieval administrative emphasis on the county has made it an obvious and convenient unit on which local studies can be based. But, whilst the county-orientated study has many advantages, not least that it is readily manageable, it also presents the historian with several problems which were equally familiar to the late medieval nobility.³ The most important of these is that, although the shire was an administrative

¹ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 34.

² Jewell, *English Local Administration*, pp. 42–7; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 263–5, 275–7. For the Beauchamp hereditary shrievalty see *The Beauchamp Cartulary Charters, 1100–1268*, ed. E. Mason (Pipe Roll Society, NS, 43, 1980), pp. xlviii–li; A. J. F. Sinclair, ‘The Beauchamp Earls of Warwick in the Later Middle Ages’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1987), pp. 1–6. For the Warwickshire–Leicestershire offices see Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 366–7. The roles of the key officers are discussed above, pp. 25–8.

³ For a discussion of the growth of local studies: above, pp. 28–30.

The geo-political framework

unit, the intertwined factors of geography and socio-political groupings bore little relation to county boundaries. Equally, it was rare for a magnate's landed holding to be coterminous with the county unit. As a result, any county-based study must be undertaken with the proviso that political groupings and influences could extend well beyond the limits of the shire.⁴ As Carpenter has shown, this was particularly true of Warwickshire, which was subject to cross-border centrifugal forces caused by a combination of geographical features and tenurial patterns. As a result, successive fifteenth-century earls of Warwick had to work hard in order to exert their influence on a county-wide basis. On the other hand, Carpenter also found that there was a strong geo-political link between western Warwickshire and eastern Worcestershire and that in Worcestershire the Beauchamps' landed holdings and influence were much more secure.⁵ Rather than concentrate on one county, therefore, this book will consider both Warwickshire and Worcestershire, which for the purposes of this study will be termed the West Midlands.

Any understanding of the needs and aims which drove Warwick's rule of the West Midlands must begin with an analysis of the geo-political circumstances with which he was faced. The most stable of these circumstances was the geographical character of the region. Features such as hilly or forested regions, rivers or open ground could have a profound effect on the way of life in a county, particularly on vital aspects such as ease of communication and the ability to make a living from the land. These features were overlaid by the man-made strata of socio-political structures, many of which were centuries old, and included the arrangement of territorial blocs and a patchwork of liberties and franchises. This combination of geographical and socio-political factors was often mutually reinforcing, but at the same time it was not entirely static. Shifts could occur in the balance of landed power in the region through a combination of death, minority, inheritance or royal policy. Thus, in order to retain control over politics, Warwick needed to be able to adapt and modify his rule in reaction to these fluctuations.

As Carpenter has shown, the West Midlands were particularly notable for their geo-political diversity, which produced a whole series of regional identities. For example, the ancient boundaries of the kingdom of the Hwicce, which became those of the diocese of Worcester, lent particular regional characteristics to southern Warwickshire and

⁴ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 25–7, 33–4; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 352–5, 363–5. The exceptions to this rule were the Welsh Marcher lordships, where landed power and the boundaries of lordship were coterminous: R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282–1400* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 9–10, 65–78.

⁵ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 19–33, 295–309, 345–6.

Worcestershire.⁶ This delineation overrode the county boundaries, and in this was characteristic of the geo-political patterns of the region. As a result of the late (tenth-century) shiring in the area, the Midland counties failed to attain the cohesiveness of other shires whose boundaries were more ancient and less artificial in their origins.⁷ Geographically speaking, Warwickshire is one of the clearest examples of this. The southern part of the county was the area described by Leland in the 1530s as ‘champion country’, known in Warwickshire as the Feldon, a landscape characterised by gently rolling, open countryside, ideal for arable farming. This region stretched from roughly south of the Avon in Warwickshire, eastwards into Leicestershire and south-west through the Vale of Evesham and down to Bredon Hill in Worcestershire. The fertile soils of the Avon valley and the lands south of it encouraged early settlement in the region. The distinct geographical nature of the Feldon also accentuated its division from the region north of the Avon, the Arden. With its sometimes heavier and generally less fertile soils, fewer nucleated settlements, more fragmentary manors and wooded aspect, the Arden was slower to be colonised than the Feldon and retained its distinctive character until the late eighteenth century.⁸

This Arden–Feldon divide was further exacerbated by the fact that the Feldon was mostly in the diocese of Worcester, whilst the Arden fell within the jurisdiction of the bishops of Coventry and Lichfield.⁹ This meant that towns such as Stratford and Warwick and the region around them looked to the bishops of Worcester for ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Meanwhile the northern region of the county, including Coventry itself, looked to the bishops of Coventry and Lichfield, who usually resided in the latter town. These ecclesiastical jurisdictions magnified the pre-existing geographical divide between the Warwickshire Arden and Feldon and encouraged cross-border Warwickshire–Worcestershire and Warwickshire–Staffordshire links.¹⁰ In Worcestershire, the Severn valley also attracted early settlement, and, as it was navigable as far as

⁶ R. H. Hilton, *A Medieval Society: The West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1–8; C. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: The Estates of the Bishop of Worcester, 680–1540* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 7–9; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 26–7.

⁷ Jewell, *English Local Administration*, pp. 42–3.

⁸ J. Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535–1543*, ed. L. Toulmin-Smith, (London, 1907–10), II, p. 47; *VCH Warwks.* II, p. 137; *VCH Worcs.* II, pp. 197–9; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 13–16; Jewell, *English Local Administration*, pp. 80–6; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 25. See Figure 1.

⁹ *VCH Warwks.* II, 137; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 9–10, 12–16; Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 23–4; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 19–27.

¹⁰ Stratford was in fact directly under the bishops’ control: *VCH Warwks.* III, p. 258; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 1–8; Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 7–9; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 25–7.

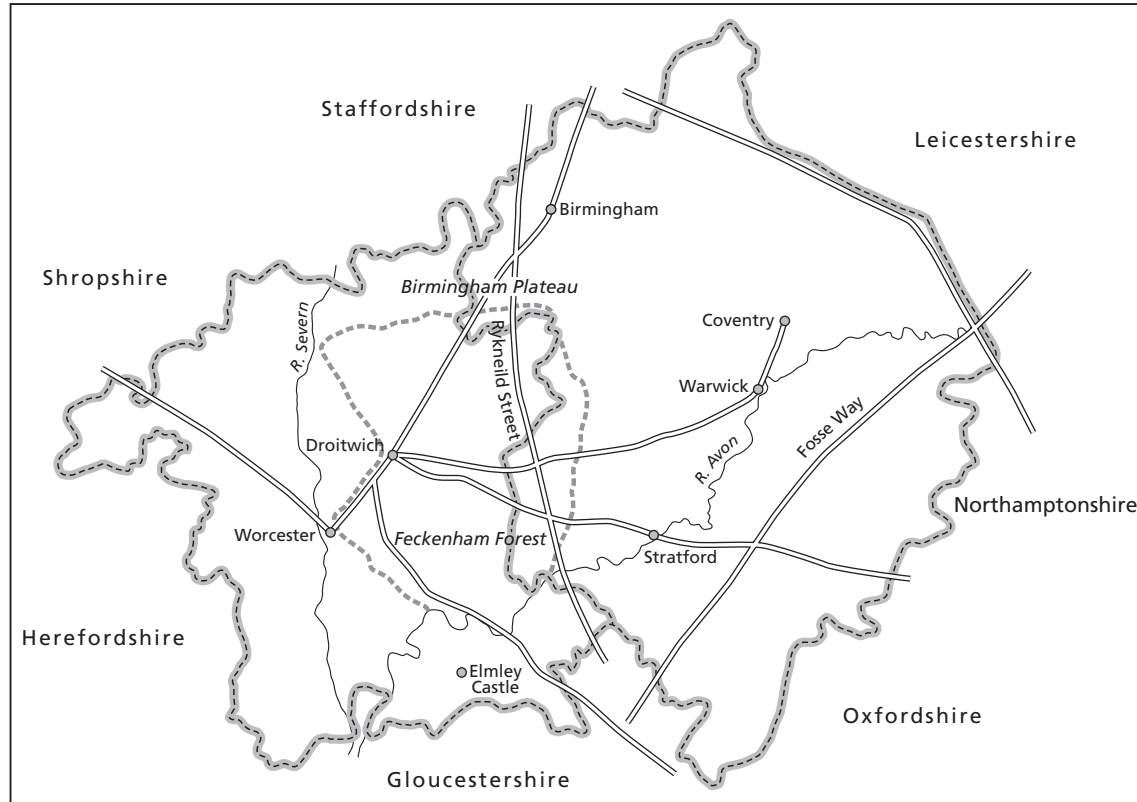


Figure 3 Major geo-political features of the West Midlands

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

Shrewsbury, provided a useful trading link. The Severn could also act as a natural barrier, and, on some occasions, even a frontier. Since it was bridged at Gloucester and Worcester, the importance of these two towns was enhanced, but, at the same time, the region of Worcestershire west of the Severn was separated from the rest of the county. This natural severance was both augmented and complemented by political and tenurial factors.¹¹

It was not only rivers that could act as factors in the particularism of a region; hilly ground and heavily wooded areas, which were often associated with poor soil, could also play a prominent role in the definition of localities. Although the West Midlands did not possess true upland areas, there was extensive higher ground. The largest such area was the Birmingham plateau, which actually covered a considerable area of north-west Warwickshire (comprising Solihull, Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield), and north-east Worcestershire (the area known as the Lickey Hills, around Halesowen and Clent). This area, which was consistently above 400 feet, extended northwards into Staffordshire. Carpenter has shown that this locale had a very particular and regionalised politics of its own in the fifteenth century. It appears that the situation was little different in the latter half of the fourteenth century.¹²

There were also considerable forested areas in the region, some of them private chases. These included over spills of the royal forests of Wyre and Kinver in northern Worcestershire. In the south-western corner of the county, there was also the privately owned Malvern Chase.¹³ However, these forested areas were relatively minor compared to the wooded region which dominated much of central and northern Worcestershire and the Warwickshire Arden. In Worcestershire, the royal forest of Feckenham stretched from the walls of Worcester itself, south to Pershore and north to Bell Brook and the Lickeys. It also impinged on western Warwickshire, its boundaries reaching to the River Arrow. At this point the royal forest merged into the Warwickshire Arden, which continued as far east as Weston in Arden. However, this is not to suggest that the region was entirely impenetrable or completely covered in trees. The royal forest of Feckenham was also an administrative unit, and both Feckenham and the Arden contained estates which were cleared for agriculture or pasture.¹⁴

¹¹ Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 9–10; Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 23–4; below, pp. 38–9. There was no other bridge between Bridgnorth and Gloucester: *VCH Wors.* II, p. 197.

¹² Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 20–1, 25, 297–9.

¹³ *VCH Wors.* II, pp. 197–8; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 13–16. Malvern Chase was held by the Despencers: *VCH Wors.* IV, pp. 93–4; below, p. 52.

¹⁴ *VCH Warwicks.* II, p. 137; *VCH Wors.* II, pp. 197–9; Jewell, *English Local Administration*, pp. 80–6; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 25.

The geo-political framework

From earliest times, a network of roads and track overlaid the terrain, although geographical features could influence not only the quality of the road, but also whether one existed at all. Roads were, self-evidently, vital for trading links and communications on both a local and national basis, but in times of crisis, they could also be of strategic significance, particularly at river crossings or junctions.¹⁵ Warwickshire lay in the centre of England, which meant that it was on several important routes linking the north and west with the south.¹⁶ Similarly, the proximity of Worcestershire to the Welsh Marches and the fact that Worcester lay on the main route to north Wales meant that in periods of disturbances in Wales the military and strategic significance of the county was heightened.¹⁷

The most important roads in the West Midlands were those constructed by the Romans. These included the Fosse Way, which ran from Cirencester through the Feldon in a direct line north-east to the Leicestershire border, where it formed an important crossroads with Watling Street, which skirted the Warwickshire–Leicestershire border before turning north-west across the far north of Warwickshire. Ryknield Street ran from the north via Staffordshire and continued southwards through western Warwickshire, passing near Birmingham and through Alcester *en route* for Bidford-on-Avon in Gloucestershire.¹⁸ These Roman roads formed a rough parallelogram around the edges of Warwickshire, but there was also some penetration into the centre of the county. There were especially strong cross-country links between Birmingham, Coventry, Droitwich and Worcester, which both served and encouraged the trading links between these towns as well as the natural cohesiveness of the region of eastern Worcestershire and western Warwickshire. In particular, the long-established saltways, which extended from Droitwich, provided a significant communications network. Thus, Coventry and Droitwich were linked by a route which crossed Feckenham and the Arden via Coughton and Warwick. Another road from Droitwich passed further south through Alcester and Stratford. Similarly, Droitwich was linked by road to Worcester and Birmingham, and, further afield, to Lichfield and Doncaster. A second thoroughfare branched off this Doncaster road and ran eastwards through Bromsgrove to Coventry.¹⁹

¹⁵ A contemporary example of the importance of roads and junctions can be found just over the border in Oxfordshire in the Radcot Bridge campaign: J. N. L. Myres, 'The Campaign of Radcot Bridge in December 1387', *EHR*, 42 (1927), 20–33; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 187–8.

¹⁶ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 17, 28–9. ¹⁷ *VCH Worcs.* II, p. 198.

¹⁸ *VCH Warwicks.* II, p. 138; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 10–12; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 29–30. See [Figure 1](#).

¹⁹ *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 72–4.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

Droitwich and Worcester were also well linked by road to nearly every part of Worcestershire and beyond. Since Worcester was the only place in the county where the Severn was bridged, several roads converged on the town, enhancing its importance in the county. Perhaps the most important of these routes linked Droitwich and Worcester to London, Oxford, Chipping Norton and Evesham. From Worcester, the road continued west to Ludlow, and was thus the main thoroughfare connecting southern England to north Wales. Another road from Worcester went further north through Kidderminster and Bridgnorth to Shrewsbury. Meanwhile, Worcester, Droitwich, Gloucester and Bristol were linked by a road running along the eastern bank of the Severn from Worcester. The only region not served by a Droitwich saltway, or any other important road, was the south-west of the county, which suffered both from a lack of nearby bridges over the Severn and also from somewhat hilly and marshy country, which discouraged road-building.²⁰

In general, therefore, roads tended to exist where there was relatively clear and open countryside. Conversely, particularly rough terrain had its isolation reinforced by the difficulties of establishing communications there. Thus, access to the heart of the Arden or the south-west corner of Worcestershire was more difficult than travel across the Feldon or southern Worcestershire. Where roads did exist in more difficult countryside, such as the Birmingham plateau, problems could arise from the terrain; the heavy clay soils of the region meant the area was also liable to flooding, which enhanced the importance of focal points such as Birmingham, where several Arden roads met.²¹

It should be clear that the geography of the West Midlands was conducive to the formation of regional connections beyond the county boundaries, particularly with Staffordshire to the north, Leicestershire to the east and the Marcher counties to the west of Worcestershire. On the other hand, the open countryside of south-eastern Worcestershire and western Warwickshire, which was so well served by roads, also formed a distinct region. This means that neither county can be treated either as separate from those around it or as a natural geo-political unit. To add to the complexity of the situation, the tenurial patterns of medieval society and the demands of national politics could either reinforce existing regional tendencies within the area or act as centrifugal forces across county borders. This is particularly clear in the case of western Worcestershire beyond the Severn. Since the western border of Worcestershire was in places only a few miles from Wales and neighboured the Marcher counties of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, Worcestershire's own

²⁰ *VCH Wores.* II, p. 198; IV, p. 383. ²¹ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 20–1, 28–9.

The geo-political framework

importance fluctuated in response to national and Marcher politics. In the earlier middle ages, the Severn was often used as a line of defence against invasion by the Welsh. This probably encouraged the notion that the lands west of the river had more in common with the Marcher counties than with the rest of Worcestershire; it may also have discouraged bridge-building, except in major towns which could be defended more easily.²² Although fourteenth-century England was largely free of serious incursions from Wales, it seems that the ancient role of the Severn as a defining boundary remained, and was even to be pressed into action in the early fifteenth century. With Glendower's revolt in 1400, Worcestershire once more became a military base. The continuing importance of the Severn as a defensive shield was emphasised in 1405, when invading French forces camped just eight miles from the walls of Worcester. It is not surprising therefore that in the later middle ages the Severn was still perceived by contemporaries as a boundary, all lands west of it being described as 'in Welshry'.²³ The structure of land-holding in this westernmost part, dominated by Marcher lords such as the Mortimers and Despensers, tended to accentuate such associations.²⁴

The liberties and franchises of the great lay and ecclesiastical landlords could also play an important part both in creating distinctive localities and in fracturing the cohesiveness of the West Midlands as a whole. Worcestershire was particularly affected by this trait. Whereas Warwickshire possessed very few liberties – the small hundred of Pathlow, held by the bishops of Worcester, and the royal interest at Coventry – Worcestershire was dominated by private franchises.²⁵ The greatest of these was the Beauchamp hereditary shrievalty of the county. Through the shrievalty the Beauchamps had an unrivalled ability to influence county politics either in person or through their nominees. The earls of Warwick also traditionally claimed the franchises of the hundreds of Doddingtree (in north-west Worcestershire) and Halfshire, which covered most of the north-east of the county. Even if these claims were spurious, these two hundreds may well have been under the de facto control of the Beauchamps, since their tenure of the hereditary shrievalty allowed them free rein in the appointment of the hundred bailiffs.²⁶ However, the Beauchamp interest in these two hundreds was easily outweighed by the church-controlled hundreds. Blakenhurst hundred was controlled by the abbots of Evesham, and Pershore hundred was shared

²² *VCH Worcs.* II, pp. 197–8; Davies, *Lordship and Society*, pp. 15–20; above, p. 36.

²³ R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change, Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), p. 446; Davies, *Lordship and Society*, pp. 15–20.

²⁴ Below, pp. 51–2.

²⁵ For Coventry, see *VCH Warwks.* VIII, pp. 1–3; below, p. 58.

²⁶ Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 232–3; *Beauchamp Cartulary*, pp. xxi–xxiv, xlviii–li.

between the abbots of Pershore and Westminster, but the largest and most important of the hundreds was that of Oswaldslow, which covered much of the south and central parts of Worcestershire. Oswaldslow had been held by the bishops of Worcester since the seventh century. This ancient private jurisdiction, although much eroded by the incursions of the Beauchamps through their hereditary shrievalty, can only have added to the sense of cohesion in the southern-central part of the county and made it distinct from other areas.²⁷

How did Thomas Beauchamp's rule of the West Midlands operate in the midst of this considerable regionalism? An attempt to answer this question cannot be made without a preliminary consideration of the location of his lands within the West Midlands. Such an analysis will highlight both Warwick's landed strengths and his weaknesses in the region and thus cast some light on the underlying aims and motives of his rule.

The process by which the Beauchamps acquired their substantial landed inheritance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by a combination of lucky marriages, purchases and royal service, has been described elsewhere, but is worth mentioning briefly.²⁸ The Beauchamp family originated in Worcestershire, where, from the twelfth century, they were the leading landed family. In the mid thirteenth century, a fortunate marriage alliance eventually brought William Beauchamp the earldom of Warwick, together with its associated estates. By the early fourteenth century, in addition to their acquisitions in the West Midlands, the Beauchamps had accumulated a belt of estates running across southern and central England from Norfolk, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire in the east, through Northamptonshire and Rutland, to Wiltshire and Cornwall. In 1354, they also began to emerge as a power in the Welsh Marches, when Earl Thomas I was awarded the lordship of Gower by Edward III.

Despite these extensive landed interests, it is clear that the Beauchamps' chief *locus* of power remained in the West Midlands. From the mid thirteenth century, the acquisition of the earldom of Warwick with its Warwickshire estates precipitated a shift in emphasis for the Beauchamps from their native Worcestershire to Warwickshire. As Carpenter suggests, this may have been because the Beauchamps' ability to defend their territorial interests in north Warwickshire was dependent on their active participation in the political life of the county as a whole. The Beauchamp lands

²⁷ *VCH Wores.* II, p. 198; III, pp. 246–7; IV, pp. 1–4; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 29, 232–3; *Beauchamp Cartulary*, pp. xvi, xviii–xx.

²⁸ This paragraph is based on the work of Mason, *Beauchamp Cartulary*, pp. xviii–xl, xlv–xlviii, and Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 1–20.

in Warwickshire were too numerous for them to be ignored completely, and to do so would have put them, and the Beauchamp following which stemmed from them, in jeopardy.²⁹ The increasing importance of the town and castle of Warwick as a base for the Beauchamps is underlined by the fact that in 1369 Thomas Beauchamp chose to be buried there, the first earl of Warwick to do so since 1242. Thomas Beauchamp II followed suit; he was responsible for rebuilding the collegiate church of St Mary's in Warwick as well as for considerable additions to the defences of Warwick Castle, including the impressive Guy's Tower.³⁰ Evidence from the Ladbroke dispute shows that the earl and his council met regularly in the town, whilst in the 1390s Warwick was often in attendance at the quarter sessions there.³¹ This emphasis on Warwickshire did not mean that the Beauchamps abandoned their Worcestershire holdings, however, for not only were these major landholdings but they needed the security of their power base there in order to add weight to their influence in Warwickshire. Both the demesne manor of Salwarpe and Elmley Castle continued to be used as residences by Thomas Beauchamp II; significantly, his son was born at Salwarpe in 1382.³²

Until the early fourteenth century, the Beauchamps' main route to landed power had been through marriage, but neither the first nor the second Earl Thomas married an heiress.³³ By 1380, Thomas Beauchamp II had married Margaret, the daughter of William Lord Ferrers of Groby. Margaret brought little to the marriage by way of a landed inheritance, but there may have been more intangible benefits derived from the match.³⁴ Despite their failure to marry heiresses, the fourteenth-century earls were still able to add to their estates in the midlands. This was largely the result of a combination of hard bargaining by Thomas Beauchamp I and some fortunate deaths. Earl Thomas I was able to provide attractive dowries for his daughters, but in return his price was high. Two of his daughters, Margaret and Joan, married respectively Guy Mountford of Beaudesert

²⁹ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 30–1, 360–1.

³⁰ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 25–31; R. K. Morris, 'The Architecture of the Earls of Warwick in the Fourteenth Century', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 161–2, 169–72.

³¹ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 317–18; [Appendix IIIA](#).

³² In 1399–1400 building work and repairs were carried out on Salwarpe: TNA SC 6/1074/21; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 41–4; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 81–4.

³³ Thomas Beauchamp I's marriage was dictated by the politics of Edward II's reign; he was married as a minor to the daughter of Roger Mortimer, who brought no dower: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 23–4, although she points out that the Mortimer marriage did secure the contested lordship of Elfael for the Beauchamps.

³⁴ *GEC* XII, pp. 375–8; Margaret and the earl were definitely married by 1380 since she joined the fraternity at St Albans as the countess of Warwick in that year: BL Nero D VIII, fol. 131r; below, pp. 55–6.

and Ralph Lord Bassett of Drayton. Mountford held substantial lands in Warwickshire, Bassett in Northamptonshire. The price of the marriage to a daughter of Earl Thomas was the settlement of a considerable portion of the Mountford and Bassett inheritances by the grooms on themselves, their brides and their heirs, with reversion to Thomas Beauchamp I and his issue. Although the failure of both these families must have seemed a remote possibility when the contracts were made, in both cases this is exactly what happened, and Thomas Beauchamp II reaped the benefits. In 1369–70 he inherited the substantial Mountford lands, including Beaudesert, Henley, Whitchurch, Wellesbourne Mountford and Ilmington; many of these he granted for life to his younger brother, Sir William, in 1376. In 1390, on the death of the childless Ralph Bassett, Warwick also acquired part of his inheritance, including two manors in Northamptonshire and one in Staffordshire.³⁵

Apart from these windfalls, both the first and second Earl Thomas also consolidated their lands in the West Midlands by purchase, a practice which had been initiated by their thirteenth-century counterparts.³⁶ Earl Thomas II seems to have been restricted in his purchasing power in the 1370s, but later in his career he bought 'Ladbroke's manor' in Tanworth (1388) and Pipe Hall in Erdington (1394). He also acquired the reversion of two-thirds of the manor of Kidderminster, forfeited by Sir John Beauchamp of Holt in 1388, which he granted to Sir William Beauchamp.³⁷ Both the first and the second Earl Thomas also engaged in buying up smaller parcels of land in and around the towns of Warwick and Stratford, which they then leased out.³⁸

By the time Thomas Beauchamp II inherited his lands and title in 1369–70, therefore, the Beauchamps had already been established for a century as the leading lords in Warwickshire and Worcestershire.³⁹ Their prominence in the West Midlands, coupled with their string of properties across southern and central England, which Sinclair has estimated were worth about £2,900 per annum in 1397, ensured their place

³⁵ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 33–4, 42–5. The actual grant to Sir William was of Beaudesert, Henley, Whitchurch, Haselholt, Forwood and Studley: BL Ct. Ch. xi 70. The reversion of the Mountford inheritance was eventually granted by Warwick to the heirs general, Thomas Botiller of Sudeley and Baldwin Freville III of Tamworth in 1393–4: *Warwickshire Feet of Fines, 1345–1509*, ed. L. Drucker (Dugdale Society 18, 1943), p. 94.

³⁶ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 25–31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 42–5. The purchase of 'Ladbroke's manor' was probably the result of Warwick's involvement in the Ladbroke dispute and may have been part of an arrangement to provide greater protection for John Catesby's property: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 334; below, pp. 116–17.

³⁸ See, for example, BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 59r, 78r, 83v, 84v, 98v, 146r, 146v.

³⁹ He was granted livery of seisin of his lands in February 1370: *CCR 1369–74*, pp. 123, 127–8, and was admitted to the shrievalty of Worcestershire in April: *ibid.*, p. 138. His father died on 13 November 1369 at Calais: *CIPM 1366–9*, pp. 303–12.

amongst the leading magnates in the country, and, if they wished, an important role in national politics.⁴⁰ A less than illustrious example of the Beauchamps' prominence can be seen in Earl Guy's involvement in the Lords Ordainers' opposition to Edward II and then in the death of Piers Gaveston, murdered in Warwickshire.⁴¹ Conversely, Thomas Beauchamp I was amongst Edward III's most trusted military commanders and advisers. Thomas Beauchamp II, aged thirty at his inheritance of his father's lands and title, would have expected to assume his father's position. His situation was particularly promising because there were few claims of dower on his inheritance, something which could easily hamper a magnate's influence. Warwick's mother had also died in 1369, and, although a group of Beauchamp manors mainly in Norfolk continued to be held by his elder brother's widow until 1386, the greater part of the Beauchamp inheritance came to him intact.⁴²

The largest, and most important, bloc of lands inherited by Warwick in 1369 stretched from his *caput honoris* at Warwick Castle itself, west and south-westwards into central and southern Worcestershire. The three castles of Warwick, Worcester and Elmley formed a rough triangle marking the limits of these estates. Important properties in Warwickshire held by the earl in 1369, mostly in this area, included the manors of Ashorne, Berkswell, Budbrooke, Lighthorne, Brailes, Claverdon, Studley, Haseley, Sutton Coldfield and Tanworth.⁴³ Over the border in Worcestershire, he also had the manors of Elmley Lovett, Sintley, Abberley, Yardley and Shrawley.⁴⁴ To a large extent, this area of lands coincided with the 'champion' country of the West Midlands and the Arden-Feckenham region slightly to the north.⁴⁵ In addition, Warwick also had the overlordship of many more manors in the region and, with them, the possible service of some important members of the gentry, even in these 'bastard feudal' times. There was a striking correlation between Warwick's feudal tenants and membership of the Beauchamp affinity. For example, the Burdets of

⁴⁰ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 33–4. She excludes Gower from this figure, which was valued at £600 per annum in 1366/7.

⁴¹ McFarlane, *Nobility*, pp. 188–90; *Beauchamp Cartulary*, p. xxiv; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 17–20.

⁴² Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 42–5; R. E. Archer, 'Rich Old Ladies: The Problem of Late Medieval Dowagers', in A. J. Pollard (ed.), *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History* (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 16–26.

⁴³ *CIPM* 1366–9, pp. 303–12. For other manors, some of which were subinfeudated, see *VCH Warks.* III, pp. 65–7, 70–1, 106, 111, 116–17, 172, 179–81; V, pp. 168–9; VI, pp. 165–6. For what follows, see Figure 2.

⁴⁴ *CIPM* 1366–9, pp. 303–12; for his other manors, see *VCH Wores.* III, pp. 45–6, 206–7, 316–17, 354–5, 358, 533, 552; IV, pp. 58, 83–4.

⁴⁵ With the exception of Tanworth, which was in the heart of the Arden; above, pp. 34–6.

Arrow, Guy Spyney of Coughton, William Spennore of Spennall, Peter Holt of Studley, Alexander Besford of Besford and John Wasshebourne of Little Washbourne all held their lands from the earl and all were prominent both in the Beauchamp affinity and in the administration of the West Midlands.⁴⁶ It seems that the coincidence of Warwick's lands with a naturally defined geographical region resulted in a cohesive and active network of gentry. Significantly, in 1397, Richard II severed this cross-border link in his division of the forfeited Beauchamp lands. This appears to have been a deliberate policy by the king in order to negate the natural cohesiveness of the Beauchamp affinity in the area. Whether it worked will be discussed in [Chapter 5](#).⁴⁷

The bloc of lands straddling the Warwickshire–Worcestershire border was not the only source of landed power for Warwick in 1369. He also possessed a sizeable estate in the north-western corner of Worcestershire, comprising Abberley, Shelsley Beauchamp, Shrawley, Stockton-on-Teme and Great Witley.⁴⁸ Although these lands were relatively remote from the geo-political centre of gravity exerted by Warwick's estates further south, and cut off from them by the Severn, the Beauchamps' traditional claim to Doddingtree hundred, in which these manors were found, strengthened their ability to control this region.⁴⁹

However, if in Worcestershire Warwick inherited the traditional power and influence that his father had wielded, in Warwickshire, despite his estates, his position was less clear-cut than his father's had been. In 1344, Edward III had granted Earl Thomas I the joint shrievalty of Warwickshire and Leicestershire for life. Although the politics of the West Midlands under the first Earl Thomas are not the subject of this study, it seems likely that the combination of the shrievalties of both Worcestershire and Warwickshire–Leicestershire must have made him vastly influential throughout the region.⁵⁰ However, Thomas II was never granted the same privilege, perhaps a sign that he was not as close to the ageing Edward III as his father had been, or as well trusted by the central regime. Even without this advantage Warwick was still a powerful political force in the county but his power was more open to challenge here than in Worcestershire.

In addition to Warwick's cohesive estates in western Warwickshire, he also possessed a second, smaller territorial bloc in the far south and west

⁴⁶ *VCH Warwks.* III, pp. 28 (Burdet), 79–80 (Spyney), 172 (Spennore), 179–81 (Holt); *VCH Worcs.* III, p. 471 (Wasshebourne); IV, pp. 20–1 (Besford). See also [Appendix 1](#).

⁴⁷ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 303–4; below, pp. 195–8.

⁴⁸ *VCH Worcs.* IV, pp. 220, 332, 338, 345–6, 372. ⁴⁹ Above, pp. 39–40.

⁵⁰ *L&I* 9, p. 145; Astill shows that Warwick also had the right to appoint the under-sheriff. All but one came from Warwickshire: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 143–4.



Figure 4 Noble land-holding patterns in 1369

of the county, the most important of which were Brailes, Avon Dassett, most of Ladbroke (the subject of the famous dispute which began in 1382) and Radbourne.⁵¹ These properties, though slightly separated from the main Beauchamp estates, were still close enough for him to exert his influence in the south of the county, although the protracted nature of the Ladbroke dispute does suggest that Warwick's control was by no means complete.⁵²

Warwick's real weakness in 1369 was his lack of estates in the far east and north of Warwickshire. This situation was exacerbated by the geographical distinctiveness of these regions. In the fifteenth century, the north-east part of the West Midlands seems to have been more involved in the politics of neighbouring Leicestershire, whilst the parts in the north had more in common with Staffordshire.⁵³ In the late fourteenth century the situation was very similar. Warwick did possess some rather scattered properties in the north, namely Sutton Coldfield and Yardley (Worcestershire).⁵⁴ However, these properties tended to be rather isolated, and, although Warwick tried to alleviate the situation by acquiring more land (for example Pipe Hall in Erdington), the combination of geographical factors and the presence of other major landed estates in the area ensured that his influence in these regions would remain limited. The situation was further complicated by the fact that both the shrievalty and escheatorship of Warwickshire were held jointly with Leicestershire. Since Warwick possessed only one manor in the latter county, he was particularly vulnerable to any attempt to influence the politics of the region by the appointment of Leicestershire men to these offices.⁵⁵

This survey of Warwick's lands shows that, although he was the dominant lay magnate in Worcestershire and controlled a considerable part of Warwickshire, his influence in the latter county was far from complete. Moreover, in neither county did his rule operate in a political vacuum. There were other regional lords who could also exert influence over

⁵¹ He also held the overlordships of other manors in this region such as Barcheston, Compton Wyniates and Halford: *CIPM 1399-1405*, pp. 166-7; *VCH Warwks.* v, pp. 5, 18, 65-6, 67-8, 89-90; vi, pp. 144, 198-9. For the Ladbroke dispute, below, pp. 115-17.

⁵² Although there may have been other factors involved, such as the extraordinary tenacity of Lewis and Alice Cardian despite successive judgements against them: below, pp. 115-17, 215-19.

⁵³ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 313-16, 323-7, 360-2, 381-7; above, pp. 25-6.

⁵⁴ He also held the overlordships of Baddesley Ensor, Sheldon, Bourton-on-Dunsmore and Willey in this region: *CIPM 1399-1405*, pp. 162, 166; *VCH Warwks.* iv, pp. 20, 201-2, 233-5; vi, pp. 39-40, 259; *VCH Worcs.* iii, p. 239.

⁵⁵ For Pipe Hall: above, p. 42. The only Beauchamp manor in Leicestershire was Kibworth Beauchamp: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 207-8. This was held in dower by his sister-in-law until 1384: *CFR 1383-91*, p. 65. An example of Warwickshire being controlled from Leicestershire through the jointly held offices can be found under Henry IV: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 336; below, pp. 228-9.

local politics, especially in Warwickshire.⁵⁶ In Worcestershire, considerable landed power was vested in several extensive ecclesiastical estates. As Carpenter has shown, in order to extend and protect his influence into regions where he lacked lands, Warwick needed to co-operate with other regional magnates; they, in turn, relied on Warwick to protect their interests in the areas where his influence was the strongest.⁵⁷ Since lordship was personal, there was always scope for considerable fluctuations in personal and political relationships. For example, disputes at the king's court could be reflected in local tensions and vice versa. Equally, a premature death, a minority or the acquisition of interests elsewhere could affect the balance of power and so dictate the nature of Warwick's rule. Royal policy could also affect local circumstances. If the king chose to reward his friends or enhance their power locally through grants of land and office, ignoring the existing balance of power in the region, there would be serious repercussions for Warwick's own ability to influence local politics and so for the stability of the region.⁵⁸ To understand the political structures within which Warwick's lordship operated, therefore, the estates of the other great lords in the region need to be surveyed.

In Worcestershire the only estates to rival Warwick's in terms of size and potential influence belonged to various ecclesiastical foundations. The county was unusual both in its high proportion of church-owned estates and in the amount of liberties and franchises that were also in the hands of the church.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the current state of research on the church in local political society makes it difficult to assess its role in local politics. Although there has been considerable emphasis on the local role of the nobility, much less attention has been paid to the part played in regional politics by their ecclesiastical counterparts.⁶⁰ Considering the extent of the estates held by the church, this is both surprising and tantalising. In Worcestershire, for example, the bishop of Worcester held sixteen manors, many in the prime agricultural region of the Severn valley; the abbots of Evesham held twelve manors within their self-contained hundred of Blakenhurst; the priors of Worcester and Pershore and the abbot of Westminster also had considerable holdings in the

⁵⁶ Below, pp. 55–9. ⁵⁷ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 376–7.

⁵⁸ For Richard Beauchamp's experiences of the fluctuating circumstances in Warwickshire and his reaction to them, see Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 347–50, 314–21, 360–98. For similar circumstances under Earl Thomas II, see [Chapter 4](#).

⁵⁹ Above, pp. 39–40.

⁶⁰ The exceptions to this are: Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 25–39, 60–4, and B. J. Thompson, 'The Church and the Aristocracy: Lay and Ecclesiastical Landowning Society in Fourteenth-Century Norfolk' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1990), esp. pp. 196–202, 218–38.

county.⁶¹ We need, therefore, to ask how the local power of the church affected politics in the West Midlands.

First of all, it is possible to make some general observations about the type of men who held high office within the church in this period. In the ranks of the bishops were several younger sons of noble families. In the late fourteenth century alone the influential families of Courtenay, Neville, FitzAlan, Stafford and Despenser all provided prominent clerics.⁶² Indeed, Warwick's own younger brother, William, was originally destined for a career in the church.⁶³ Brought up as members of the nobility, these men seem to have behaved in a manner similar to their lay brothers. Bishop Despenser, for example, was as warlike as any lay magnate, scourging the peasant rebels in 1381 and leading the ill-fated Flanders crusade in 1383.⁶⁴ Similarly, Archbishops Neville of York and Arundel of Canterbury both became involved in high politics.⁶⁵ Interestingly, Neville attracted criticism in the mid 1380s for his undue influence over the commissions of the peace in Yorkshire through his affinity.⁶⁶ Since he was closely associated with the king, it is very possible that Richard was allowing him to exert his landed influence in exactly the same way as a lay magnate. How, then, do these general observations translate to the situation in Worcestershire?

The main incumbent of the bishopric of Worcester in the period was Henry Wakefield (1375–95). He was not of aristocratic stock, but he did owe his advancement to a lifelong connection to the Bohun family, which was transferred on their demise to their successor, Thomas of Woodstock. Wakefield's promotion to the episcopacy was political, the result of a protracted controversy between Edward III and the pope. From Edward's death in 1377, Wakefield lived on his estates, but he still maintained an active interest in politics. His register contains an account of the events of 1386–8, including a reference to a letter sent to him by the Appellants justifying their actions. Evidently, the Appellants thought the bishop to be an ally worth having, whilst the bishop, even if his interest was only that of a concerned onlooker, had plenty of reasons to be worried about

⁶¹ Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 23–4; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 25–8, 53–4; B. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 26–7, 31–2.

⁶² Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 60–4.

⁶³ Below, pp. 53–4.

⁶⁴ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 6–8, 88–104; *Chronicon Angliae* 1328–88, ed. E. M. Thompson (R.S., 1874), pp. 306–8, 355–7; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 75–9; *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 324–8; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 418, 429–33; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 52, 89–91; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 73, 102–7.

⁶⁵ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 448–9, 451–2, 495–6; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 118; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 184–7, 377–8, 407, 413–16, 422–3.

⁶⁶ Walker, 'Yorkshire Justices of the Peace', p. 284; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 115.

the political instability at this time.⁶⁷ As the owner of land, his interests were as much at risk from misgovernment and political crises as those of any other member of landed society.⁶⁸ The fact that the bishop was also a significant lord in Worcestershire on a scale to rival Warwick himself was not lost on Richard II, either. On Wakefield's death in 1395, the king made completely certain that the next incumbent would be loyal to him. The chroniclers are unanimous in their opinion that it was Richard's personal will which lay behind the election to the see of his royal physician, Tideman of Winchcombe. Undoubtedly, Richard's motive was to place control of the substantial landed estates and franchises of the bishopric in the hands of one of his allies.⁶⁹

Thus, the two most striking aspects of the careers of the late fourteenth-century bishops of Worcester are their involvement with politics at a national level and their position as leading lords at a local one. In this, they differed very little from the lay magnates. But it is also clear that, as a rule, they did not behave entirely like ordinary nobles. For example, they were not usually appointed to local commissions, possibly because their cloth prevented them from passing judgements of death.⁷⁰ The one exception to this was in the aftermath of the Peasants' Revolt, when the social order had been so badly shaken that the combined forces of church and state were pressed into action in response.⁷¹ But, even if the bishops themselves were not appointed to local government office, there were other ways in which they could influence local politics. Like the lay nobility, they had a need for estate officials and legal counsel to administer and protect their estates.⁷² In Worcestershire, where the bishop was so dominant, these men were also appointed to local office, a recognition of the local balance of power. Thus, Sir Richard Thurgrym, who spent his entire career in the service of Bishop Wakefield, held the offices of escheator, JP and MP, although he may have been an exceptional case.⁷³ As Dyer has

⁶⁷ This connection lasted until Wakefield's death in 1395: R. G. Davies, 'Some Notes from the Register of Henry de Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester, on the Political Crisis of 1386–1388', *EHR*, 86 (1971), pp. 547–53; G. H. Holmes, *The Good Parliament* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 7–20, 46–9; Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, p. 114.

⁶⁸ Above, pp. 19–21.

⁶⁹ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 218; *Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti*, in Johannes de Trokelowe et Anon., *Chronica et Annales*, ed. H. T. Riley (RS, 1866), p. 186; *Historia Vitae*, p. 135; Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, p. 114; below, p. 164.

⁷⁰ See, for example, the proceedings in 1397, when proctors were elected for the lords spiritual in parliament: McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, p. 480.

⁷¹ Wakefield was placed on the two commissions of oyer and terminer issued in March and December 1382 to deal with the rebels in Worcestershire: *CPR 1381–5*, pp. 138–246.

⁷² Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 114–18; Thompson, 'Church and Aristocracy', pp. 222–38.

⁷³ For Thurgrym's career, see *HP* IV, pp. 611–12.

shown, some of the bishop's officers, including Thomas Throkemerton and the cleric Robert Mile, also served the earl of Warwick.⁷⁴ This may suggest that the role of the bishop of Worcester was normally in some way subordinate to that of the earl and that the bishop was content to use the officers of the dominant lay magnate in the region as the best means of preserving his own interests.

The bishop was not the only ecclesiastical lord in the region, however. The prior of Worcester and the abbots of Evesham, Pershore and Westminster all possessed considerable estates, bolstered by their various franchises, which could make them influential locally.⁷⁵ At the same time, their position as landlords meant that they shared the same aims as any other local lord: protection of their estates and judicial rights. Even if the institutional security of ecclesiastical estates meant that these disputes were most often about rights or incursions onto their lands, rather than about the land itself, this helps to explain both the tensions which sprang up involving local ecclesiastical foundations and the regular appearance of these foundations as litigants. The chronicle of the abbey of Evesham shows that the abbots seem to have been determined to preserve their rights, an impression confirmed by the abbot's frequent appearance in law suits. Because the abbey's lands bordered the Beauchamp patrimony in south-east Worcestershire, conflict between the earls and the abbots was likely, and, by the fourteenth century, was already ancient in origin.⁷⁶ Similarly, in the early 1380s, the abbey of Westminster became embroiled in a dispute with Warwick over their respective rights and liberties in southern Worcestershire.⁷⁷ Despite this dispute, the abbot of Westminster, as an absentee landlord, was reliant on the existing structures of power to ensure the safety of his lands. Like Bishop Wakefield, and with much greater need, the Westminster abbots turned to local men with connections to Warwick to achieve this. For example, the Beauchamp man Alexander Besford was employed by Westminster as steward of the western parts of its estates.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 114–18, 382; Throkemerton was also one of the bishop's tenants: *VCH Wörcs.* III, p. 356. Mile served the Beauchamps from 1351 to 1405: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', p. 320. See [Appendix 1](#).

⁷⁵ Above, pp. 39–40.

⁷⁶ *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham ad Annum 1418*, ed. W.D. Macray (RS, 1863), pp. 299–310; *Beauchamp Cartulary*, pp. xvi–xx; Thompson, 'Church and Aristocracy', pp. 196–202, 218–22; below, p. 84.

⁷⁷ N. Saul, 'Richard II and Westminster Abbey', in W.J. Blair and B. Golding (eds.), *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 213–16: my thanks to Dr M. C. Carpenter for this reference. This dispute is discussed below, pp. 102–3.

⁷⁸ *VCH Wörcs.* IV, pp. 1–3; Harvey, *Westminster Abbey*, pp. 71–4, 90–1, although note her comments that men such as Besford were not 'professional' administrators. In fact, Besford had considerable experience in local administration and almost certainly had had legal training: *HP* II, pp. 214–16.

The geo-political framework

Turning from the ecclesiastical to the lay magnates in the region, it is clear that southern and central Worcestershire was dominated to such an extent by the properties and liberties of the Beauchamps and the church that other magnate estates there tended to be relatively small and on the geographical and political peripheries of the region. This was particularly true of the two Marcher lords with landed interests in the county, the Mortimer earls of March and the Despensers. These two families had much in common in the late fourteenth century. Both were dogged by early deaths and the consequent long minorities, and both held lands in Worcestershire west of the Severn, the region traditionally identified with Marcher politics.⁷⁹ Since both the Despensers' and Mortimers' main power bases were in the Marcher counties of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and in Wales itself, it was only natural that their Worcestershire holdings would be on the edges of their interest.

Following the disgrace and execution of the first earl of March, Roger Mortimer, the family was gradually rehabilitated by Edward III. In 1368, Edmund Mortimer married Philippa, the granddaughter of the king and only child and heiress to Lionel duke of Clarence.⁸⁰ This marriage had far-reaching consequences for the political role of the Mortimers. First, the heirs of Philippa and Edmund eventually had a claim to the throne, albeit through the female line; this was to become an increasingly important factor in the politics of Richard II's reign.⁸¹ Second, the Mortimers inherited through Philippa a considerable bloc of lands in Ireland. When this Irish inheritance was added to the existing Mortimer estates in that country, the result was that they became the leading Anglo-Irish landlords. From c. 1373, this led to a shift in the Mortimers' interests; both Edmund Mortimer and his son Roger spent a large proportion of their time in Ireland, and both died there.⁸²

As a result of their Irish interests, the Mortimers rarely visited their Worcestershire estates. These were mostly in the north-west of the county, and included Clifton-on-Teme, Mamble, Bewdley and Rock. In the north-east they held Bromsgrove and King's Norton. Although these lands formed a relatively cohesive bloc, they were on the fringes of the Mortimer patrimony, which was centred on their lordship of Wigmore and their estates in Herefordshire.⁸³ Consequently, successive generations

⁷⁹ Above, pp. 38–9. ⁸⁰ ODNB, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19343.

⁸¹ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 205–7.

⁸² G. A. Holmes, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 10–19; ODNB, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19343.

⁸³ *VCH Worcs.* iv, pp. 248–9, 285, 306–10, 320; iii, pp. 21–2; Holmes, *Estates of the Higher Nobility*, pp. 10–19; Davies, *Lordship and Society*, p. 55; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change*, p. 395. For the distribution of magnate lands, see [Figure 2](#).

of Mortimers tended to use their Worcestershire lands either as a source of annuities for their retainers or as dower lands.⁸⁴ Absence and the structure of their estates decreased the likelihood that the Mortimers would take an active interest in Worcestershire affairs. Their potential regional involvement was further reduced by the premature death of Earl Edmund in 1381 and the prolonged minority of his son Roger, who did not receive livery of his lands until 1394.⁸⁵

Like the Mortimers, the Despenser family also benefited from gradual political rehabilitation during the later fourteenth century. The Despenser lands in Worcestershire were concentrated on the western bank of the Severn around their castle at Hanley, and included Bushley, Severn Stoke and Upton upon Severn.⁸⁶ These formed the northernmost tip of the Despenser patrimony, which extended west into Gloucestershire and the Marcher lordships of Ewyas Lacy and Glamorgan.⁸⁷ Like the Mortimers, the Despensers tended to use the outlying portions of their estates for dower. Unlike the Mortimers, the Despenser dowagers tended to be long-lived, which, when combined with the extended minority of Thomas Despenser, meant that for much of the period the Despenser interest was in abeyance. On the death of Edward Despenser in 1375, his son and heir Thomas was only two years old. Many of the Despenser lands were granted in dower to Edward's wife, Elizabeth, who survived until after 1400.⁸⁸ From 1375, there followed over a decade during which the Despenser interest was absent from regional politics. Thomas Despenser only began to emerge into political life in 1388 when he accompanied the earl of Arundel on campaign in France. He was to play an important part in the king's policies towards the West Midlands in the 1390s.⁸⁹

The fractured geo-political nature of the West Midlands was further accentuated by the Botetourt of Weoley estates. The Botetourts held a compact estate in the north-east of the region which coincided with

⁸⁴ For example, Edmund Mortimer granted Hugh Boraston 100 shillings for life from King's Norton (1374): *CPR 1374-7*, p. 37; Robert Hugges 5 marks for life from Clifton on Teme (1375): *CPR 1381-5*, p. 121. The widows of Earls Edmund and Roger were both assigned Bewdley in dower: *CIPM 1377-84*, pp. 217-28; *VCH Worcs.* iv, pp. 306-10. In addition, Earl Roger's widow was assigned Clifton on Teme and Oddingley: *CCR 1396-9*, p. 453.

⁸⁵ In 1394, he was still not of age when he was granted livery of seisin: *CCR 1392-6*, pp. 203-4; *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19356; below, p. 152.

⁸⁶ *VCH Worcs.* iv, pp. 46, 93-4, 192-3, 214-15.

⁸⁷ Davies, *Lordship and Society*, pp. 469-71.

⁸⁸ Dower lands included Hanley Castle, Upton upon Severn and Bushley: *CPR 1399-1401*, p. 178; *VCH Worcs.* iv, pp. 93-4, 214-15; R. A. K. Mott, 'Richard II's Relations with his Magnates, 1396-99' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Leeds, 1971), pp. 91-4. Mott points out that Despenser appears to have administered these lands on behalf of his mother, but he did not receive the profits.

⁸⁹ *CPR 1385-9*, p. 416; below, pp. 152-3.

the distinct hilly area around the Lickeys and the Birmingham plateau. In Worcestershire their manors included Clent, Cradley, Weoley Castle, Northfield and Old Swinford.⁹⁰ Just over the border in Warwickshire they also held Castle Bromwich and lands around Birmingham.⁹¹ Since this was the region in which the Beauchamp lands were especially scarce and which tended to have its own very distinct politics, it was important that Warwick remained on good terms with the Botetourt representative, John.⁹² Although it is dangerous to argue from silence, there is no evidence that Botetourt and Warwick were on bad terms, and there is some evidence to suggest that their relationship was amicable. In 1379, for example, Botetourt was one of the witnesses of a grant to Warwick's brother, Sir William.⁹³ On Botetourt's death in 1386, his inheritance came into the hands of Hugh Burnell, by the latter's marriage to Botetourt's granddaughter and eventual heiress, Joyce.⁹⁴ Before this date, the Burnell estates were mainly concentrated in Shropshire, although they also held some scattered lands in Warwickshire and Worcestershire.⁹⁵ With the acquisition of the Botetourt inheritance, Burnell's interests began to expand into the West Midlands in the 1390s, although he did not come to full prominence until Henry IV came to the throne.⁹⁶

Another major landowner in the West Midlands was Warwick's brother William. In 1361, Earl Thomas I had rearranged the entail governing his estates to provide an income of 400 marks per annum for his younger surviving son. This was to be derived from a substantial landed estate held in tail male with reversion to the main line. Sir William, as a fourth son, had originally been destined for a career in the church. To this end, he had spent time at Oxford, and had even been admitted to minor orders. But in 1361 his career underwent a radical change of direction as a result of the deaths of two of his elder brothers. His father decided to ensure the family succession by withdrawing his son from the church.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 51, 143, 194–5, 216–19; above, pp. 36–8.

⁹¹ *VCH Warwks.* IV, p. 44. Their manors around Birmingham included the overlordship of the disputed manor of Aston, with Duddeston, Bordesley, Edgbaston and Handsworth: *VCH Warwks.* VII, pp. 58, 60, 62–3, 67, 68.

⁹² Above, pp. 44–6. ⁹³ *CCR 1377–81*, p. 329.

⁹⁴ *CFR 1383–91*, p. 193; *CIPM 1384–92*, pp. 77–9; *GEC II*, pp. 234–5, 435.

⁹⁵ The Burnells' lands in Warwickshire consisted of Bidford and Hodnel Bruiz: *VCH Warwks.* III, pp. 52–3; VI, pp. 114–15. In Worcestershire their traditional holdings included one third of Kidderminster (which was alienated to John Beauchamp of Holt in 1382–3), Broughton Hackett, Bricklehampton and Wick Burnell: *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 160–1; IV, pp. 44, 166.

⁹⁶ Below, pp. 228–9.

⁹⁷ A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to AD 1500* (3 vols., Oxford, 1957–8, repr. 1989), I, p. 138; McFarlane, *Nobility*, pp. 191–2; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 31–3; Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, pp. 141–2; J. I. Catto, 'Sir William Beauchamp between Chivalry and Lollardy', in C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (eds.), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood III* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 39–42.

Although it was not unusual for noble families to provide for younger sons with lands detached from the family patrimony – two flourishing cadet branches, the Beauchamps of Powick and Holt, had been founded in this way – what was unusual about the 1361 settlement was both the extent and the location of the endowment.⁹⁸ Instead of entailing outlying portions of the patrimony, Earl Thomas detached a portion of the main Beauchamp patrimony in Worcestershire, including the manors of Chaddesley Corbett, Sheriff's Lench, Rushock, Dunclett, Naunton Beauchamp and Pirton.⁹⁹ It is unclear why Earl Thomas decided to take this course of action; perhaps he saw that his younger surviving son possessed the ability to advance his and the dynasty's interests nationally and wanted to give him the wherewithal to achieve this. Certainly, Sir William's subsequent successful career would support the earl's faith in him.¹⁰⁰ However, whatever the reason for this unusual move by the earl, Sir William's estates had been an intrinsic part of the Beauchamp inheritance, and it was vital that he and his elder brother should co-operate, since failure to do so could have weakened the main source of the Beauchamp landed influence in the West Midlands.

On Thomas II's succession in 1369 he not only honoured his father's generous endowment of his brother, but also added to it in 1376 with the grant for life of most of the Mountford estates.¹⁰¹ Thus, Warwick actively colluded in his father's policy of granting to Sir William estates central to the Beauchamp patrimony. The close connection between the two brothers' estates was further enhanced in 1390–1 when Sir William acquired part of the Hastings inheritance. Many of the Warwickshire manors that he obtained in this transaction were held from Warwick himself, including Corley, Barcheston, Bedworth and Upper Shuckborough.¹⁰² The two endowments of Sir William may have been a deliberate policy in order to tighten Beauchamp control over the county, but again it was a policy which was reliant on good relations between the brothers. Luckily, the two men seem to have been on lifelong good terms. When Sir William was in Warwickshire, he can be found in attendance at Warwick's council.¹⁰³ He also acted with his brother in the foundation of the guild of

⁹⁸ The Beauchamps of Powick were a thirteenth-century foundation: they held Alcester (Warwks.), Bransford, Powick and Acton Beauchamp (Worcs.) from the main line: *VCH Warwks.* III, p. 15; *VCH Worcs.* IV, pp. 104, 186, 225. The Beauchamps of Holt had been endowed with Holt Castle, also held from the main line: *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 403–4.

⁹⁹ *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 36–8, 46–7, 203–4, 211–12; IV, pp. 144, 181; above, pp. 43–6.

¹⁰⁰ Below, pp. 122–3. ¹⁰¹ Above, pp. 41–2.

¹⁰² *VCH Warwks.* IV, p. 58; V, p. 5; VI, pp. 27–8, 216; www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50236 R. I. Jack, 'Entail and Descent: The Hastings Inheritance, 1370 to 1436', *BIHR*, 38 (1965), pp. 10–12.

¹⁰³ He was present at Warwick's council twice in 1383: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 315.

The geo-political framework

the Holy Trinity at Warwick in 1383 and the endowment of the chantry at the collegiate church of St Mary's, Warwick, in 1385.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Sir William was also actively involved in royal service, which meant that he could be put in an ambiguous position once relations between the king and the earl worsened and also that he was often away from his estates. He was chamberlain to Richard II from c. 1377 to early 1381 and from 1381 to 1390 he was captain of Calais.¹⁰⁵ From 1390, his acquisition of the Hastings inheritance necessitated a shift in the focus of his interests to the Welsh Marches. These circumstances may have limited his active involvement in local politics to the role of a sleeping partner and ally to his brother. It is noticeable that Sir William's own affinity was small compared to that of his brother, and that several of his officers also served the earl.¹⁰⁶

If, in Worcestershire, Warwick was undoubtedly the most dominant lay magnate, the same was not true of Warwickshire. There, despite the weight of lands held by the Beauchamps in the west of the county, he could not hope to dominate the county without the co-operation or acquiescence of the other regional magnates.

From the time of Earl Guy, the Beauchamps attempted to ensure good relations with the other West Midlands noble families by marrying a succession of daughters into them. As a result, Warwick had ties of kinship to other members of the regional nobility. Thus, Warwick's sisters Joan and Margaret were married to Ralph Lord Bassett of Drayton and Guy Mountford; the tenurial benefits of these matches have already been described.¹⁰⁷ Warwick also possessed several more distant kinsmen. William Lord Astley of Astley was the son of one of Guy Beauchamp's daughters, and therefore a cousin to Warwick. More distantly, the first wife of John Lord Clinton was the granddaughter of Earl Guy. This made their son Sir William (d. 1383) and their grandson, William II, cousins of Warwick, although this connection was probably never very close.¹⁰⁸ Warwick's illegitimate half-sister, Mary, also made a locally useful marriage; her first husband was Sir Richard Herthill of Pooley, a member of the Beauchamp affinity in Warwickshire.¹⁰⁹ Thomas II's own marriage to Margaret, daughter of William Lord Ferrers of Groby, was also designed to extend family connections in the region. The Ferrers possessed considerable estates in Leicestershire, which spilled over into eastern Warwickshire, where the Beauchamp influence was at its weakest. Such was the Beauchamps'

¹⁰⁴ *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 268, 271, 580. ¹⁰⁵ Emden, *Biographical Register*, p. 138.

¹⁰⁶ See [Appendix 1](#). ¹⁰⁷ Above, pp. 41–2.

¹⁰⁸ *GEC* i, p. 284 (Astley); *GEC* iii, pp. 314–15 (Clinton).

¹⁰⁹ W. Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (2 vols. in 1, London, 1730), pp. 157–9.

concern to form links with the Ferrers that Thomas II's elder brother, Guy, had married Philippa, the daughter of Henry, the second Lord Ferrers.¹¹⁰ But undoubtedly the most important marital connection of all with regard to Warwick's ability to rule the West Midlands was that of Hugh, earl of Stafford, to Warwick's sister Philippa.¹¹¹

The earls of Stafford were amongst the leading landowners in Warwickshire, which made their kinship with Warwick particularly important for both families. Warwick's brother-in-law, Hugh, succeeded his father to the earldom in 1372. The Stafford lands in Warwickshire were considerable, but were not held in a convenient bloc. Their largest holdings were in the far south of Warwickshire around Wilmington, Tysoe, Whatcote and the Wolfords.¹¹² In the west of the county they owned a compact estate centring on Wootton Wawen; in the far east they also held Rugby, purchased in 1383.¹¹³ The disposition of the Stafford and Beauchamp estates meant that both sides had much to gain by an alliance. It has been pointed out that to assume the existence of such alliances presupposes good relations between the potential participants, something which ties of kinship alone could not secure.¹¹⁴ Whilst it is never easy to show that an alliance and friendship existed, in the case of Warwick and Stafford there does appear to have been a genuine attachment between the two men, from their mutual involvement in the siege of Quimperlé in 1375 to their joint protestations concerning the murder of Stafford's son and heir in 1385.¹¹⁵ The Stafford estates in the south and west were neatly sandwiched between the much more extensive Beauchamp lands. Co-operation between the two families would increase their joint influence in the region, especially in the south, which was a considerable distance from the main Stafford estates in Staffordshire. In return, the Staffords could exert their influence from their Staffordshire estates over the far north of the county where Warwick had few lands.¹¹⁶ After Stafford's departure and death on pilgrimage in 1387, a direct result of his disenchantment with the regime in the aftermath of his son's murder,

¹¹⁰ GEC xii, pp. 375–8; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 360; above, p. 41. The Ferrers held land at Ashow, Wolhamcote, Ladbroke, Flecknoe and Wolvey Astley, all in the east of Warwickshire: *VCH Warwks.* vi, pp. 13, 144, 269–70, 283.

¹¹¹ GEC xii, pp. 177–9.

¹¹² *VCH Warwks.* v, pp. 6, 176, 202–3, 215–16; C. Rawcliffe, *The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham, 1394–1521* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 8–12.

¹¹³ *VCH Warwks.* iii, pp. 197–200; vi, 202; Rawcliffe, *Earls of Stafford*, p. 192.

¹¹⁴ R. E. Archer, 'The Mowbrays, Earls of Nottingham and Dukes of Norfolk to 1432' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1984), pp. 296–9.

¹¹⁵ C. C. Bayley, 'The Campaign of 1375 and the Good Parliament', *EHR*, 55 (1940), 370–83; Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 43–5, 49–50, 149–58; *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 365; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 89–90.

¹¹⁶ For Warwick's lands in this region: above, pp. 45–6; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 32; Rawcliffe, *Earls of Stafford*, pp. 8–12.

The geo-political framework

Warwick lost a powerful ally and friend. In the 1390s his connection with the Staffords gradually weakened as a succession of young earls died before reaching their majorities and the vacuum this created was filled by John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster.¹¹⁷

John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, held a prominent position both locally and nationally on the strength of both the substantial Lancastrian estates which he had inherited and his position as son to Edward III and uncle to Richard II.¹¹⁸ Although his active rule tended to be concentrated in Leicestershire and Derbyshire, his ownership of the key fortress of Kenilworth Castle meant that he had an interest in Warwickshire. Evidently, he intended Kenilworth to be an important focal point for his affinity and a symbol of his power, since he spent large sums of money over a twenty-year period on ambitious building works there. As Goodman points out, Kenilworth was within easy reach of Lancaster's considerable estates in Leicestershire, which included the castle of Leicester, one of the duke's favourite residences. Combined with his power base at Kenilworth, Lancaster's Leicestershire holdings meant that his potential ability to influence Warwickshire was considerable.¹¹⁹ But, as we shall see, his acquisition of the greatest magnate estate in England combined with his position as a prince of the realm and a player in European politics meant that his rule could never be that of an ordinary magnate. This was to have repercussions for local and national rule throughout the period.¹²⁰

From 1389, the potential for Warwickshire politics to be influenced from Leicestershire was further increased by the emergence of Thomas Mowbray. Mowbray was the heir to the extensive Segrave and Brotherton estates. But, as the result of the longevity of his grandmother, Margaret of Brotherton, his prospects were never fully realised. She survived until 1399, and during her long life held most of the Brotherton and Segrave lands. Thus, although Mowbray was heir to several manors in Warwickshire, including Kineton, Caludon, Alspath, Aspley, Flecknoe, Thurlaston and Weston-by-Cherrington, together with North Piddle in Worcestershire,

¹¹⁷ Although Warwick was granted custody of the Stafford lands in February 1386 in conjunction with the heir, Thomas, John Lord Neville and William Beauchamp: *CFR* 1383–91, p. 173; Rawcliffe, *Earls of Stafford*, pp. 11–12; below, p. 151.

¹¹⁸ Walker points out that there were representatives of Gaunt's affinity in twenty-two counties, which is indicative of the unusual extent of his estates: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 31–5.

¹¹⁹ *VCH Warwicks*, vi, pp. 134–8; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 97; A. Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1992), pp. 305–7. Warwick, his wife and brother went to dinner at Kenilworth in July 1383: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 19.

¹²⁰ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 127–41, 182–209; note Carpenter's comments on the unique nature of the Lancastrian affinity and the dangers of drawing general conclusions concerning the role of the magnates from its example: Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 361–3.

he held only the first two of these during his lifetime.¹²¹ This is not to suggest that Mowbray's position was necessarily weak, however, since he did inherit the Mowbrays' own lands in Warwickshire, most of which were situated near the Leicestershire border, and included the manors of Brookhampton and Monk's Kirby, with a number of overlordships in eastern Warwickshire including Newbold-on-Avon and Withybrook. These estates dovetailed with the traditional Mowbray patrimony in Leicestershire, which centred on Melton Mowbray.¹²² Although in 1387 Mowbray was sufficiently alienated by Richard's rule to join the Appellants, from 1389, when he was granted livery of his inheritance, his Leicestershire–Warwickshire power base formed an important element in the king's policies.¹²³

One further source of landed power in the region also needs to be considered here. From 1376, there was a significant, unprecedented, shift in the power structure of Warwickshire. In that year, the future Richard II inherited his father's patrimony of the earldom of Chester, which, in Warwickshire, consisted of half of Coventry with many of its surrounding manors. Normally, this would have been used to endow the heir to the throne, but because Richard had no children the lands remained in his hands throughout his reign.¹²⁴ The importance of Coventry as a potential power base was first realised by Lancaster in the 1370s, then by Richard himself in the late 1380s. As a result, the town was to play an important role in the politics of Warwickshire.¹²⁵

Bridging the gap between the nobility and the mass of the gentry was a small but significant group of landowners, the greater gentry of the West Midlands. With their concentration of lands and involvement in local politics, they could often be as influential locally, if not more so, than the members of the lesser baronage. Amongst this group were the Beauchamps of Holt, the Cokesays of Cooksey (both Worcestershire), the Pecches of Hampton-in-Arden and the Frevilles of Tamworth (both Warwickshire). Each of these families held a string of manors in the region, and they often had landed interests elsewhere. They were also characterised by their ability to make important marriage alliances, and to act as pseudo-nobility, should a power vacuum occur in the area as a result of

¹²¹ Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 24–8, 334.

¹²² *VCH Warwks.* v, p. 106; vi, pp. 174, 188, 265–6; Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 159–60; Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 36, 208–9; Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 1–4.

¹²³ Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 66–75; below, pp. 153–4.

¹²⁴ *VCH Warwks.* viii, pp. 1–3; B. P. Wolffe, *The Royal Demesne in English History* (London, 1971), pp. 52–8; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 27.

¹²⁵ Below, pp. 126–7, 156–7.

The geo-political framework

inadequate magnate leadership, or none.¹²⁶ The Frevilles, for example, were dominant in the north of Warwickshire, holding Tamworth Castle, with Lea Marston and Dordon. In the early 1370s, they also acquired property around Coventry, as a result of their involvement as feoffees in the Milcote dispute. Such was the Frevilles' position in local political society that Baldwin Freville II was able to marry Joyce Botetourt, one of the daughters of John Botetourt.¹²⁷

If, on occasion, these men could take the place of a local magnate, in most circumstances they still tended to look to their noble superiors for protection and lordship. Thus, Baldwin Freville II used the dominant lord in the north, John Botetourt (who was also his father-in-law), as a feoffee;¹²⁸ Walter Cokesey, with his kinsman William, followed a long family tradition of service to the Beauchamps;¹²⁹ and John Pecche II was retained by John of Gaunt.¹³⁰ Even in the eyes of these influential men, the nobility were crucial to the stability and smooth functioning of their localities.

In summary, in Worcestershire, Warwick was perfectly placed to dominate local politics; his landed estates outnumbered those of any other lay magnate, whilst his tenure of the shrievalty meant that he was able to extend his influence on a county-wide basis. In Warwickshire, however, because his landed estates were not spread right across the county, he was always reliant on the co-operation of other magnates to ensure his effective control of local politics on behalf of both the king (as long

¹²⁶ Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism*, pp. 215–23; Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England*, pp. 1–18. The Cokesseys held a number of manors in north Worcestershire, including Timberhonger, Cooksey, Little Witley, Goldicote, Orleton, Lower Sapey, Sutton Sturmy and Great Witley: *VCH Wors.* III, pp. 24, 232, 405; IV, pp. 8–10, 269, 328–9, 345–7, 367, 372. They also had landed interests in Cheshire, Lincolnshire and Shropshire: *CCR 1374–7*, p. 102; *CCR 1385–9*, p. 298; J. T. Driver, 'The Knights of the Shire for Worcestershire during the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V, II', *Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd ser., 4 (1974), pp. 32–3. According to Dugdale, a Cokesey married a daughter of Thomas Beauchamp I: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 275. The male line of the Pecche family died out in 1386 with John Pecche II, who left two young daughters. He was one of the most prominent landed gentry in Warwickshire, holding the manors of Bickenhill, Hampton-in-Arden, Chadwick, Avon Dassett, Wormleighton and Dunchurch: *VCH Wors.* IV, pp. 35, 82, 88; V, pp. 48, 67–8, 220–1; VI, pp. 79–80; Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 47–8. The Beauchamps of Holt are discussed below, pp. 103–6.

¹²⁷ *VCH Warks.* IV, pp. 114, 190–1, 246; P. R. Coss, *The Langley Family and its Cartulary: A Study in Late Medieval 'Gentry'* (Dugdale Society Occasional Papers 22, Oxford, 1974), pp. 14–18. The Coventry property included Wyken, Pinley, Stivichall and Shortley; *GEC* II, p. 234.

¹²⁸ TNA SC 80333/E1103; Botetourt was also a witness to a quitclaim to Freville: SBT DR 10/478.

¹²⁹ The Cokesseys were feudal tenants of the Beauchamps at their main seat of Cooksey: *VCH Wors.* III, p. 232. The family tradition of service to the Beauchamps went back to the thirteenth century: Hilton, *A Medieval Society*, pp. 59–60. Walter Cokesey's daughter also married the Beauchamp man Thomas Archer: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, pp. 546–7; [Appendix 1](#).

¹³⁰ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 277.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

as the king wished him to) and the Beauchamp affinity. This factor was to cause problems for Warwick throughout the period. But crucially, in both counties, Warwick's local power, like that of almost all nobles, was always reliant on the good will and co-operation of the king. If the king was either unable to rule or to work with the earl, then the consequences both for Warwick, and for local stability, would be serious. The intertwined relationship of local and national politics and the effects these had on the balance of power in the region will be the subject of the next four chapters.

Chapter 2

1369–1382

The year 1369, when Warwick inherited, was in many ways a watershed in the fourteenth century, marking the beginning of a series of interconnected crises. At the root of these problems were the reversals suffered by the English in the second phase of the Hundred Years War, which began that year. This failure was related to over a decade of uncertainty over who was to hold the reins of executive power as Edward III's old age gave way to Richard II's nonage. It has been argued that it is possible to overemphasise the extent of the English losses in France or the long-term impact of such crises as the Good Parliament. Nevertheless, the fact that it is difficult to unravel who was in charge of governance during the period reflects the considerable contemporary confusion which stemmed from lack of leadership from the monarch.¹ Since the course of politics in the West Midlands, and Warwick's rule there, can only be understood if the nature and *locus* of central authority is defined, it is important to analyse the earl's activities within the wider framework of national politics. In turn, Warwick's experience in the West Midlands will help to answer the questions of how the resumption of war and the power vacuum at the centre affected the stability of the localities.

The question of how active Edward III was in government from 1369 is an important one. Certainly, there is some evidence to support the idea that Edward remained in charge, for example his intention to lead an expedition to France in person in 1372, which was only thwarted by bad weather. Yet there is also evidence that the grouping around Edward, which was so roundly condemned in the Good Parliament for its misuse

¹ For the view that the English situation in France was not as disastrous as the chroniclers and subsequent historians have depicted it see J. J. N. Palmer, *England, France and Christendom, 1377–99* (London, 1972), pp. 1–8. Similarly, Holmes has argued that the long-term effects of the Good Parliament were very limited: Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 195–8. For a more traditional view of the English problems in France see E. Perroy, *The Hundred Years War* (London, 1951), pp. 158–65.

of power, was already beginning to form by the early 1370s.² Perhaps the last years of Edward's rule should be seen in terms of a gradual but uneven decline into incapacity. On some occasions, such as the planned expedition of 1372, he was still capable of taking an active role, but on others, such as his illness in 1376, when he was too unwell to attend parliament, he was clearly unfit to wield power.³

As Edward III's ability to rule declined, so the politics of the 1370s were profoundly influenced by growing uncertainties at the centre concerning who was to control government. This situation was exacerbated by the illness of the obvious replacement for Edward, his eldest son and heir, the Black Prince. After 1371, ill health meant that the Prince of Wales took no further part in campaigns abroad, and his participation in domestic politics was increasingly curtailed, although local evidence shows that it should not be assumed that he was completely incapacitated.⁴ Since the Black Prince's heir, Prince Richard, was born in 1367, the prospect of the Prince of Wales predeceasing the king and leaving a boy as heir to the throne loomed large. Of Edward's other sons, Lionel duke of Clarence was already dead, and Clarence's heir, Roger Mortimer, was a very young man; Thomas of Woodstock was still a minor; and Edmund earl of Cambridge seems to have been ill-suited to any role in which he was required to take the initiative. In addition, by the 1370s, Edward III had outlived all his old friends and companions in arms; one of the last to die was Thomas Beauchamp I.⁵ The new generation of magnates could not hope to have such a close co-operative relationship with the ageing king as that enjoyed by their fathers. At the same time, they were faced with a situation entirely alien to their political experience. Magnates such as Warwick had grown up under a vigorously active king; they had no experience of a situation where the monarch was incapable of rule. However, from 1369 to 1375, most of these magnates were fighting abroad.⁶ Almost by default, therefore, leadership gradually devolved upon Edward's third son, John of Gaunt.

² For the traditional view of Edward's decline from c. 1369 see McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 384–7; W. M. Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III: Crown and Political Society in England, 1327–77* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 27–30, 34–5. Evidence from the Milcote dispute in Warwickshire shows that before 1372 Alice Perrers was already looked upon as a powerful ally: below, pp. 74–6. Walsingham says that Edward III was misled by 'evil counsel' in 1370: Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* 1, p. 309. Edward's chamberlain and steward, Latimer and Neville, who were both impeached in 1376, took office in late 1371: Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 63–9; C. Oliver, *Parliament and Political Pamphleteering in Fourteenth-Century England* (York, 2010), pp. 29–31, 39–49, emphasises the attack on 'London capitalists'. There were already complaints about Latimer's financial transactions in the 1373 parliament: McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, p. 385.

³ Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 4–6. ⁴ Below, pp. 75–6.

⁵ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 384–5; Ormrod, *Reign of Edward III*, pp. 27–34: 'Edward III outlived his own generation and his own usefulness' (quotation from p. 27).

⁶ Below, pp. 64–6.

The extent of Gaunt's involvement in domestic and foreign policy throughout the late fourteenth century was both crucial and unprecedented. If his role was created initially by default, then it was also enhanced by the combination of his rank as the king's son and the extraordinary nature of his landed holdings and retinue which far outweighed those of any other magnate. Through a series of fortunate deaths, Gaunt had inherited in their entirety the vast Lancastrian estates. He was thus in a position where potentially he could make his influence felt in regions as diverse as Yorkshire and Lancashire in the north, Derbyshire and Leicestershire in the midlands and Norfolk and Sussex in the east and south-east.⁷ This landed power reinforced his influence at the centre as the leading magnate. However, because he was not only the leading magnate in the realm but also a prince of the blood he felt the need to carve a place for himself on the international stage by marrying the heiress to the throne of Castile, thus involving himself with the succession dispute there.⁸ At the same time, his domestic standing as Edward III's son, the leading magnate and the only person available to take responsibility for government meant that his influence on the politics of the period was pervasive. Between 1369 and 1374, when he was often absent, his influence was felt at one remove and it is evident that there was no single controlling hand at the centre as various factions attempted to gain the king's ear. Nevertheless, it seems that even during Gaunt's absence, the regime looked to his landed influence to control the West Midlands during the power vacuum there.⁹

From 1374, when Gaunt returned from France and decided on a policy of peace, it seems that he also decided to take government into his own hands. As we shall see, Gaunt's decision to take control was linked to a reversal in central policy towards law and order and a number of changes in the power structure of the West Midlands.¹⁰ From 1374, Lancaster's position can be compared to that of the duke of Suffolk in the 1440s. As Watts and Castor have shown, both men found themselves filling the vacuum created by the absence of an active king, but both also had to act as local magnates as well. This caused mounting tensions in the polity, because a magnate who, as lord of an affinity, needed to support his men could not also fulfil the king's role as the fount of executive authority and the ultimate arbiter of disputes resulting from magnate misrule. As we shall

⁷ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 29–34, 37–50, 248–9; Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, pp. 42–3.

⁸ Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, pp. 111–38.

⁹ This becomes clear in the context of local politics: below, pp. 68–73.

¹⁰ Below, pp. 80–93. Walker shows that, in the later 1370s and early 1380s, Gaunt also had considerable influence over government through members of his affinity who held prominent posts in the central administration: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 105–7.

see, Gaunt's influence in the West Midlands may have been resented by Warwick, but there was no ultimate recourse to be had.¹¹ The similarities between Gaunt's and Suffolk's roles can only be taken thus far, however. Unlike Suffolk, Gaunt's landed influence was not confined to two localities; this was a double-edged sword in his exercise of power. On the one hand his vast landed inheritance enhanced his position. But, on the other hand, as Walker's work has shown, Lancaster's widespread influence combined with his other responsibilities nationally and internationally made it difficult for him to make his influence fully felt in some of his more far-flung estates. This factor, combined with the centrality of his role, may have contributed to local disorder.¹² Furthermore, Gaunt was not entirely suited to the role of substitute for the king which he had assumed. He was determined to ensure that the royal prerogative remained intact, as his actions in revoking the deeds of the Good Parliament show. However, when it came to military leadership, his grasp of strategy was questionable, and he was personally responsible for some of the English failures to capitalise on advantageous military situations.¹³ Gaunt's temperament also appears to have done little to aid his attempts at leadership. During the 1370s he managed to quarrel with a succession of important and influential men. Nevertheless, the fact that these incidents took place at all and were widely reported in the chronicles demonstrates Gaunt's prominent position in central politics during the period.¹⁴

If the accusations of the Good Parliament are to be believed, it seems that, while Gaunt was away in France, much of the day-to-day responsibility for domestic government and the organisation of the war was held by the group closest to the king. These men included his household officers, William Lord Latimer (the chamberlain) and John Lord Neville (the steward). With them came to be associated a group of financiers, notably

¹¹ Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 149–99; Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*, pp. 100–27. Gaunt was luckier than Suffolk, however, because there was an obvious end in sight to his role – Richard's majority.

¹² Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 127–41, 182–209, 248–61; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 356–61.

¹³ The most famous example was his great chevauchée from Calais to Bordeaux in 1373–4, which achieved no apparent military advantage and resulted in the deaths of many of his men: www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14843. For Gaunt's actions in restoring royal power after the Good Parliament: Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 159–65, and below, pp. 81–2.

¹⁴ These included Thomas Beauchamp I in 1369, the duke of Brittany in 1373, the bishop of Winchester in 1376–7, the Londoners who rioted against him in 1377 and his dispute with Henry Percy in 1381: *Continuatio Eulogii Historiarum 1361–1413*, ed. F. S. Haydon (RS, 1863), III, p. 336; Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* I, pp. 308, 315–17; *The Anonimale Chronicle*, ed. V. H. Galbraith (Manchester, 1927), pp. 59–61, 73–4, 104–6; www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14843; Perroy, *Hundred Years War*, pp. 158–65; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 385–6, 393–4; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 250; K. Towson, "Hearts warped by passion": The Percy–Gaunt Dispute of 1381', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* III (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 143–54. But for a more sympathetic view of Gaunt's strategy and rule: Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, pp. 51–65, 211–35.

Richard Lyons. The final member of the group was the king's mistress Alice Perrers. Gaunt may have acquiesced in the rise to prominence of this group while he was abroad since both Latimer and Neville were closely connected to him. Certainly, appointments in the West Midlands suggest that the regime was looking to the duke's men to provide local governance.¹⁵ This group presided over the reversal of English fortunes in France. A combination of bad luck, delays, embarrassing defeats such as the capture of the earl of Pembroke by the Castilians at La Rochelle in 1372 and tactical errors by Gaunt resulted in the loss of most of the lands in France acquired under the Treaty of Brétigny in 1360. At the same time, England's southern coastline and northern border came under attack for the first time in many years from the Franco-Castilian navies and the resurgent Scots.¹⁶ From the point of view of the parliamentary Commons, who were paying for the war through substantial grants of taxation, the expeditions of the 1370s represented an unmitigated disaster.¹⁷ On the other hand, they were equally unhappy with any attempt to come to terms with France which seemed to involve the unnecessary surrender of English lands and fortresses. The final straw came in 1375, when Gaunt negotiated a truce with France, just as an English army was poised to seize Quimperlé. When parliament was summoned in the following year, the Commons launched an attack on the king's circle, whom they held to be responsible for the military and financial fiascos since 1369. Amongst the magnates who appear to have been sympathetic to the Commons' grievances was the earl of Warwick. He had had considerable firsthand experience of Gaunt's mismanagement of the war in France, and had been present at Quimperlé. Evidently, the Commons saw him as a potential ally, since they named him on the intercommuning committee which was to advise them.¹⁸ Ironically for Gaunt, therefore, the truce for which he had worked for almost a year also had the unwelcome side-effect of introducing into domestic politics a group of magnates, including not only Warwick, but also Warwick's brother-in-law the earl of Stafford

¹⁵ Latimer was an associate of Gaunt's: McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, p. 400; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 36–7. Neville was retained by Gaunt, a relationship that lasted into the 1380s: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 276; M. Aravingian, 'A Lancastrian Polity? John of Gaunt, John Neville and the War with France, 1368–88', in Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* III, pp. 125–42. For the evidence of appointments to local office: below, pp. 68–74.

¹⁶ Perroy, *Hundred Years War*, pp. 159–65; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 385–6; Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 21–45, 53–8.

¹⁷ See, for example, the complaints in the 1373 parliament: *RP* II, pp. 316–17. (The electronic version of the Rolls of Parliament were not available when this research was completed; all references to the Rolls of Parliament are to the hard copy, not the electronic version.)

¹⁸ Walsingham, *Historia Anglica* I, pp. 318–20; *Chronicon Angliae*, pp. 68–100; *Anonimale Chronicle*, pp. 79–94; *RP* II, pp. 321–9; Bayley, 'The Campaign of 1375', pp. 370–83; Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 4–6, 33–62.

and his cousin the earl of March, who had the most reason to distrust his leadership. Warwick himself seems to have been so disillusioned with his experiences in France that he never campaigned there again.¹⁹

How did the increasing crisis of authority at the centre, Gaunt's attempts to fill the power vacuum from 1374 and the resumption of war affect the politics of the West Midlands? One problem for the regulation of government in the localities was the absence abroad of many members of the nobility with their war retinues, which included some of their close associates amongst the local gentry. Warwick himself was away for lengthy periods between 1369 and 1375. Although the evidence is patchy, it seems that his only extended stay in England at this time was in 1371.²⁰ Similarly, the fortunate survival of Warwick's retinue roll for Gaunt's chevauchée in 1373–4 indicates that many of the men who formed the core of Warwick's post-1375 domestic affinity were abroad serving in his war retinues. They included Henry Ardern, Nicholas Lyllyng, William Spernore and John and Thomas Bermyngeham. On Warwick's return in 1375, many of these men appear as local officers for the first time.²¹ Doubtless, other West Midlands gentry were similarly engaged in other magnate war retinues such as those of the earls of March and Stafford and John of Gaunt himself, who were all active abroad until 1374–5.²² The absence of so many members of the West Midlands nobility and prominent gentry left a power vacuum which the government had to fill.

Warwick's prolonged absence in the period immediately following his father's death meant that he had no opportunity at this time to build up his following and influence locally. This seems to have led to problems in asserting his authority over the West Midlands. As the work of Carpenter on Richard Beauchamp has shown, lordship could work in the absence of the magnate, but only if he possessed a tightly organised and well-trusted group of officers to enforce his rule locally.²³ Even then, this could not be a permanent replacement for on-the-spot lordship. Magnates who spent long periods of time away from their estates might find it difficult to assert their power, since members of the gentry tended to look to lords who

¹⁹ Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 1–3.

²⁰ He was abroad in Gaunt's retinue at Calais in 1369; in July 1370 he was sent as an envoy to Cherbourg to escort the king of Navarre to England; in 1372, he was involved in the abortive naval expedition to La Rochelle; in 1373–4 he served under Gaunt on the chevauchée to Bordeaux; from late 1374 he was probably involved in the planning for the much-delayed expedition that finally left for Brittany in April 1375: www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1841; GEC XIII, pp. 375–8; Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 1–2.

²¹ TNA E 101/32/39; below, pp. 82–3; see [Appendix 1](#).

²² For example, Sir Ailred Trussell, who was later retained by Warwick, served the earl of Stafford in France in 1372: *HP* IV, pp. 664–6.

²³ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 369–71. Earl Richard also had the advantage of having had several years being resident on his estates.

were resident in the region as the best source of protection and influence.²⁴ But even in the earl's absence his estates still had to be administered and his interests safeguarded. Although evidence relating to the earl's affinity and the activities of his ministers is sparse for the period before 1382, it is still possible to reconstruct them to a certain extent through the evidence of enfeoffments and grants made by Warwick. Generally, when a name is repeatedly associated with the earl's business in such capacities as feoffee or holding an office such as sub-sheriff of Worcestershire, then the cumulative evidence may be taken to suggest a strong link with Warwick.

During Warwick's absence, it appears that his estates were administered by a skeleton staff, manned by a mixture of clerks and lawyers, most of whom had served Warwick's father. They included figures such as Richard Piriton, Robert Mile, Edmund Brugge and John Rous.²⁵ These men often acted as attorneys, feoffees and co-recognitors. Rous, for example, served Warwick's father as sub-sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire from September 1366 until the earl's death in November 1369. His connection with the Beauchamps continued into the 1370s: he was particularly active as a witness to grants between members of the Warwick affinity, including the controversial settlement of Spennall on William Spennore by the Spyneys in 1375.²⁶ But even with his father's trusted administrators in charge of his estates, Warwick's control over their activities could not be complete while he was away, and it appears that some laxity crept in. In 1371, following the death of his father-in-law, William Lord Ferrers of Groby, Warwick's officers became involved in some chicanery concerning the manors of Flecknoe and Merks Hall (Essex) when Edward Stebbyng and Robert Bradenham, claiming to be feoffees of William Ferrers, quitclaimed the Essex manor and £12 rent from Flecknoe, with the reversion, to Warwick.²⁷ Warwick's part in this affair is unclear, but it

²⁴ Walker shows that Gaunt had problems exerting his authority in regions removed from his main locus of power, for example Sussex: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 127–41; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 356–66.

²⁵ Appendix 1.

²⁶ *LEI* 9, p. 145. He witnessed a quitclaim to Warwick in 1375: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 21r. For his association with other members of the Beauchamp affinity as a witness, see also: SBT DR 37/2428 (grant of manor of Widney by Philip Aylesbury to William atte Wode, 1371); WCRO CR 1998/36/N5 (grant to Guy Spyney, 1375). For the Spyney–Spennore deed see SBT ER 1/61, no. 5. Rous was later retained by Gaunt: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 280; below, p. 95. The Spennall settlement is discussed below, pp. 84–6.

²⁷ *CCR* 1369–74, pp. 322, 327; for Warwick's marriage to Margaret Ferrers: above, p. 41. Flecknoe was held by the Ferrers from Warwick: *VCH Warwicks.* vi, p. 270. Stebbyng and the Beauchamps were already connected since in June 1371 Stebbyng had been forced to give surety that he would not travel abroad to sue against the earl in the Papal Curia, following Warwick's suit against Stebbyng for his failure to render account for the time he was acting as receiver to the earl: *CPR* 1370–4, p. 170.

is possible that his judgement was lacking, and that he actively connived with Stebbyng to secure part of the Ferrers inheritance. If this was Warwick's aim, it is noticeable that he was unable to defend himself against the complaints of Margaret Ferrers, William's widow; possibly, the earl lacked the necessary local and central influence to do so. In November 1371 an inquiry was issued to investigate a claim by Margaret that Stebbyng and Bradenham had acquired the manors by forgery. The inquiry upheld these allegations, and Margaret was granted seisin of the lands and rent in the following year.²⁸

As we have seen, local law and order was enforced by the resident nobility and gentry in co-operation with the king, although the role of the JPs in this structure remains unclear for this period.²⁹ The power vacuum in the West Midlands from 1369 to 1375 had an impact on the availability of suitable candidates to fill the local offices in Warwickshire and Worcestershire, especially in Warwickshire. As we have seen, Warwick was not yet established locally, although in 1371, when he was at home for an extended period, his influence may have been behind the appointment of Sir Richard Herthill, one of his men, as sheriff.³⁰ The earl of Stafford was also new to his inheritance in the early 1370s, and, like Warwick, was mostly absent abroad.³¹ The heir to the Mowbray inheritance was a young boy.³² Such was Gaunt's landed power that it may have seemed to the domestic regime that the natural solution to fill this vacuum was to appoint to local office men with links to the duke. This was achieved through his considerable landed power base over the border in Leicestershire, the county which shared the shrievalty and escheatorship with Warwickshire.³³ This helps to explain the preponderance of Leicestershire men appointed to office in the early 1370s. Between 1373 and 1375, all the sheriffs and escheators came from Leicestershire.³⁴ Although it has been difficult to establish the affiliations of these men, it is possible to make some tentative links between them and Gaunt. For example, Sir Roger Hillary (sheriff, 1372–3) went to France in Gaunt's retinue in 1373;³⁵ Sir John Berkeley, who was pricked as sheriff but released from his duties, came from a family with traditional links to the Lancastrian affinity; his son John Berkeley II definitely served

²⁸ *CIMisc* 1348–77, pp. 309–10; *CFR* 1369–77, p. 105. ²⁹ Discussed above, pp. 26–8.

³⁰ Above, p. 55; *L&I* 9, p. 145. Herthill was married to Warwick's illegitimate half-sister: [Appendix 1](#).

³¹ Stafford inherited his title and lands in 1372: above, pp. 56–7.

³² For the Mowbray inheritance: above, pp. 57–8. ³³ Above, p. 57.

³⁴ *L&I* 9, p. 145; *List of Escheators*, p. 168. The sheriffs were: John Besvyll (1373–4), John Berkeley of Wymondham (1374, did not account), John Burdet of Huncote (1374–5). The escheators were: Richard Foxton (1372–4), Thomas Walssh (1374–5).

³⁵ Hillary had lands in Warwickshire (half the manor of Stretton on Fosse), Staffordshire and Leicestershire; this was the only occasion on which he held office in the West Midlands: *CIPM* 1399–1405, p. 255; *VCH Warwicks*, v, p. 154; *John of Gaunt's Register, 1371–1375*, ed. S. Armitage-Smith (Camden, 3rd ser., 20, 1911), I, pp. 31–3.

Henry Bolingbroke.³⁶ Similarly, Sir Thomas Walssh (escheator, 1374) was steward of the honour of Leicester by 1389; his links with Gaunt almost certainly predated this.³⁷ It is also possible to show that these office-holders were all drawn from the same Leicestershire network: Walssh, for example, employed William Palmer (escheator 1371–2) as a feoffee; both Walssh and Palmer stood surety for Sir William Flamville (escheator 1376, sheriff, 1379); and, in 1389, Walssh obtained custody of the lands of Sir John Besvyll (sheriff, 1373).³⁸ Although this evidence is drawn from later in the period, the fact that all of these men were serving as officers in the 1370s cannot be entirely coincidental. It may be that what linked them was a connection to the Lancastrian affinity, although without further study of the Lancastrian affinity in Leicestershire, it is impossible to be certain. What is certain is that they were not members of the Beauchamp affinity.

In Worcestershire the situation regarding office-holders was very different. Despite his absences, Warwick was able to retain control over the politics of the county because his landed power there was greater than that of any other magnate (apart from the bishop of Worcester) and because he held the hereditary shrievalty of the county.³⁹ The earl was granted livery of the shrievalty in April 1370 and immediately appointed his own man, Richard Ruyhall I, as deputy sheriff. Ruyhall was replaced in 1372 by Warwick's 'bien amez' John Aleyn, who held the position until 1377.⁴⁰ Even when the shrievalty had been in the crown's hands, from November 1369 to April 1370, while Thomas Beauchamp waited for livery of his lands, the man appointed by the king, Sir Richard Fyton, was connected to Warwick. Although Fyton was replaced as soon as Warwick was granted the shrievalty, he later appears in other official capacities, notably as MP for Worcestershire.⁴¹ Since he would hardly have been elected without Warwick's tacit consent, his removal from the shrievalty was probably due to Warwick's need to be seen asserting his authority locally, rather than from any animosity on the earl's part.

³⁶ *HP* II, pp. 199–200.

³⁷ Walssh was MP for Leicestershire no less than fifteen times between 1371 and 1397, which may suggest he had Gaunt's backing. Similarly, in 1369, he went to France in Gaunt's retinue and in 1371 was associated with another Lancastrian retainer, Robert Swillington: *HP* IV, pp. 756–7; Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 165–7, 217; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 288.

³⁸ *Worcestershire Feet of Fines*, p. 98 (Walssh–Palmer, 1397); TNA KB 27/508 (Walssh–Palmer–Flamville, 1388); *CFR* 1383–91, p. 279 (Walssh–Besvyll).

³⁹ Above, pp. 44–7.

⁴⁰ *CCR* 1369–74, p. 138; *L&E* 9, p. 157. In a letter to the chancellor, Richard le Scrope, in 1372, Warwick informed him of his appointment of 'mon bien amez Jankyn Aleyn', and asked le Scrope to help Aleyn in his duties, and report what had been done: TNA SC 1/41/171; [Appendix 1](#).

⁴¹ Fyton served as MP for Worcestershire in 1371, 1372, 1376, 1377 and 1382: J. T. Driver, 'Worcestershire Knights of the Shire III', *Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd ser., 5 (1976), p. 7; [Appendix 1](#).

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

Turning to appointments to the peace commissions in the West Midlands, it becomes apparent that, between 1369 and 1374, the personnel of the local benches and their activities were not a matter in which the government felt the need to interfere. As Earl Thomas I had been a member of the peace commissions for both Warwickshire and Worcestershire, new commissions were issued to take account of his death in 1369.⁴² The new earl's absence from the region was mirrored in his absence from the county benches. After some minor alterations to the Worcestershire bench in 1370, the commissions underwent no further changes until October 1374, when Warwick was included for the first time on both benches, together with one of his most trusted retainers, Henry Ardern.⁴³ After this, the government seems to have taken more interest in the personnel on the commission. Between 1375 and 1377 there followed annual alterations to the personnel of the two benches.⁴⁴ In February 1379, however, both commissions underwent a much more radical alteration when Warwick was omitted altogether. At the same time, the numbers on the Worcestershire bench were cut from eleven to five, possibly in response to Warwick's involvement in local disorder.⁴⁵ In May 1380, Warwick was restored to both benches, and John of Gaunt was added to the Warwickshire bench for the first time.⁴⁶

⁴² *CPR 1367–70*, pp. 344, 418. The commissioners were: Warwickshire, 26 December 1369: John Botetourt, John Cavendish (assize justice), John Clinton, John Honyngton, Thomas Ingleby (assize justice), Simon Pakeman (Gaunt's steward of Leicester: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', p. 152), Philip Purfrey. Worcestershire, June 1370: John Botetourt, Henry Bruyn, Richard Fyton, William Honyngton, John Mowbray (assize justice), Henry Percehay (assize justice), John Rous.

⁴³ *CPR 1367–70*, p. 419; *CPR 1370–4*, p. 478. The Worcestershire bench was altered in November 1370 to: Botetourt, Bruyn, John Beauchamp of Holt, John Honyngton, Mowbray and Percehay. The commissions issued in October 1374 were: Warwickshire: Warwick, Henry Ardern, Botetourt, Robert Burgulon, John Cavendish, John Clinton, John Honyngton, Thomas Ingleby, Simon Pakeman, Philip Purfrey. For Worcestershire: Warwick, Ardern, Botetourt, Bruyn, Burgulon, David Hanemer (assize justice), John Honyngton, Walter Perle (assize justice), John atte Wode (king's knight: Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 281).

⁴⁴ *CPR 1374–7*, pp. 138, 139, 313, 314, 491; *CPR 1377–81*, pp. 45, 46. The Warwickshire commissions were as follows: December 1375: Warwick, Botetourt, John Clinton, Ardern, Ingleby, William Wynchyngham (assize justice), Robert Warrewyk (unidentified); July 1376: Warwick, Botetourt, Clinton, Ardern, Burgulon, William Burgh (Gaunt's steward of Leicester, 1377–8: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 288), Ingleby, Pakeman; July 1377: Warwick, Botetourt, Clinton, Ardern, Burgh, John Catesby, William Skipwith (assize justice). For Worcestershire: December 1375: Warwick, Ardern, Beauchamp of Holt, Bruyn, David Hanemer, Perle, atte Wode; May 1376: Warwick, Botetourt, Ardern, Beauchamp of Holt, Bruyn, Burgulon, Walter Cokesey, Hanemer, Roger Kirketon (assize justice), Jatte Wode; July 1377: Warwick, Botetourt, Beauchamp of Holt, Bruyn, John Cassy (assize justice), Cokesey, Hanemer, Kirketon, atte Wode.

⁴⁵ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 312; below, pp. 83–9.

⁴⁶ *CPR 1377–81*, pp. 512, 515; below, pp. 94–5. The commissioners for Warwickshire were: Gaunt, Warwick, Clinton, Ardern, Burgulon, Burgh, Catesby, John Rous, Skipwith; for Worcestershire: Warwick, Botetourt, Beauchamp of Holt, Bruyn, John Cassy, Cokesey, Hanemer, Robert Tresilian (assize justice), atte Wode.

It is much more difficult to determine who amongst these appointees was actually active at the quarter sessions, since the documentation tends to be sparse and, where it does exist, is often found in several different places, so that the evidence needs to be put back together before any sense can be made of it. Many of the references for the West Midlands commissions come from the chance preservation of gaol delivery rolls for Warwickshire and Worcestershire. These provide one reference to the Worcestershire JPs for 1369 and several for the late 1370s.⁴⁷ A second lucky survival, occasioned by the visit of King's Bench to the region in 1387, provides considerable information about the activities of the Warwickshire JPs in the early 1380s, which has been published by Kimball.⁴⁸ Other cases appear in Putnam's work on the Justices of the Peace in the period.⁴⁹ The problem of evidence tends to be more acute for Worcestershire than for Warwickshire. The varying practices of the clerks of the county bench cause particular problems in the identification of the active JPs. Throughout the period the clerks for Worcestershire rarely listed the names of all the JPs present, preferring the formula '*et sociis suis*'.⁵⁰ The problem is exacerbated by the fact that, although this formula sometimes referred to the magnate heading the commission, this is not necessarily evidence that he was present. For example, a case before the JPs in Worcestershire in late June 1375 was heard *coram Thoma de Bello Campo et sociis*, but Warwick may still have been abroad at this time.⁵¹ On the other hand, one of the very few full listings of JPs in Worcestershire sitting at a session shows that Warwick and his noble associate in Worcester, John Botetourt, did act as JPs in the period.⁵² On other occasions, gentry JPs are named at the head of the sessions roll, rather than their noble colleagues, for example Henry Bruyn in October 1380 and October 1382.⁵³ The naming of these JPs instead of their noble counterparts does tend to suggest that the clerks were referring to the highest-ranking person present. This evidence can be used to give an impression of which JPs were active in Worcestershire, but it should be treated with considerable caution.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ TNA JUST 3/160, m. 3; JUST 3/166, mm. 7d., 8, 10d., 12d.; JUST 3/172, mm. 2, 4d.

⁴⁸ Published in *Rolls of the Warwickshire and Coventry Sessions of the Peace, 1377–97*, ed. E. G. Kimball (Dugdale Society 16, 1939), pp. 15, 39–40, 50–1, 98–9, 102–10, 116–20, 125, 127, 129, 156–7.

⁴⁹ Putnam (ed.), *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, pp. 402–17.

⁵⁰ See, for example, the references *ibid.*

⁵¹ TNA JUST 3/166, m. 8. The sessions took place on 28 June; the truce at Bruges, which ended the siege at Quimperlé, took place the next day: Holmes, *Good Parliament*, p. 52; above, pp. 65–6.

⁵² TNA KB 27/461, Rex, m. 20; below, pp. 78–9; [Appendix III](#).

⁵³ TNA JUST 3/172, m. 2.

⁵⁴ Putnam takes the named justice to be the 'working justice': Putnam, *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, p. 402.

What does emerge from the evidence available about the activities of the JPs is that much of the day-to-day work was done by a small group of justices (usually two or three). In Warwickshire these included Henry Ardern and, from c. 1381, Robert Burgulon and John Catesby. In Worcestershire, the working justices were led by a magnate, John Botetourt, and included Henry Bruyn and, occasionally, Henry Ardern. It seems that the ordinary work of the peace commissions, which dealt with men below gentry status and with relatively minor offences, was carried out by these men, several of whom (Bruyn, Burgulon and Catesby) had legal training. Ardern's presence may be explained by his close connection with Warwick; perhaps he was acting as the earl's representative. However, on three occasions the peace commissions took on extra significance and were used as a means of reinforcing political power in the region. On each occasion, a member of the nobility was definitely present: Warwick in April 1375 and July 1381, and Gaunt in May 1381. These cases will be considered at length in the general discussion of local order in the West Midlands.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, it can be safely concluded from the appointments to office and the activities of the JPs that the commissions were still small (fluctuating between seven and ten members) and not yet representative of the wider body of county landowners, although, as indicated above, the county bench was not entirely divorced from local politics. There is also no evidence that the justices of the assize were active on the peace commissions, although this could be because the relevant documents have not survived. However, since there is evidence from elsewhere in England that the justices did attend the quarter sessions from the 1380s, there might be another explanation, connected to the continuing experimentation with the JPs.⁵⁶ This was an aspect of the policy of the central administration towards local justice in the period, which we now need to consider in order to understand the role of the JPs within the wider judicial system, in these years.

Governmental policy towards justice in this period can be divided into two phases, the first dating from early 1368 to early 1374, the second beginning in 1374 and continuing until mid 1384. The period to 1374 was characterised by two interlinked factors. First, after early 1368, King's Bench, which had previously taken fairly regular perambulations around the country, became more static. Apart from one visit to Winchester in mid 1371, it did not move beyond the London region until 1375.⁵⁷ We should note that work by Powell has shown that King's Bench in its role as superior eyre was used as a means of asserting royal judicial authority in

⁵⁵ See also Appendix II A; below, pp. 78–80, 94–5. ⁵⁶ Below, pp. 89–95.

⁵⁷ See the tables in Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 202–4.

the localities. It was employed to deal with especially serious cases of local disorder which could no longer be contained by local self-regulation.⁵⁸ Second, the evidence from the West Midlands shows that there was a dramatic reduction in the number of commissions of inquiry and oyer and terminer issued for the region. Between July 1370 and June 1374 there were no commissions of oyer and terminer or inquiry issued for Warwickshire. For Worcestershire, there were none between September 1368 and June 1374. Both these developments suggest a lack of central direction, which would fit with what we know of the health of the king and his eldest son at this time. From mid 1374, there was a complete reversal of these trends. The increasing numbers of commission issued after this date were paralleled by annual excursions of King's Bench into the localities, which were halted only by the years of crisis in 1376–7.⁵⁹ These trends are mirrored directly by the governmental policy towards the peace commissions. Before 1374, the personnel remained very static, whereas after this date the benches underwent a series of changes. It is also noticeable that no cases for the reign were removed from the county benches to King's Bench before 1374.⁶⁰

The evidence points strongly to a change of policy towards the judicial system in c. 1374. This can be linked to the return of Gaunt from France in that year. Perhaps he decided that since royal control was lacking from the judicial system, a campaign was needed to eradicate perceived disorder in the localities. From 1368, with the gradual loss of the directing will of the king, and the resumption of the war imminent, it seems that the judicial system became temporarily of secondary importance to the government. This is not to imply that justice was allowed to stagnate, however. In 1372, a new Chief Justice of the King's Bench (CJKB), John Cavendish, was appointed. He seems to have been determined to encourage cases to be brought directly to King's Bench, despite its sedentary nature at the time. From 1372, there was a sudden increase in the

⁵⁸ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 173–4.

⁵⁹ For the perambulations of King's Bench, see Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 202–3. The next logical step in this argument would be to place the evidence from the West Midlands in the context of a national policy. Constraints of time and space have militated against this, but a rough count of commissions of oyer and terminer issued between the years 1368 and 1374 does appear to confirm that this was a nation-wide policy. The numbers of commissions issued were as follows: nineteen in 1368, twelve in 1369, eleven in 1370, ten in 1371, five in 1372, twenty-two in 1373 and thirty-six in 1374. These figures suggest that there was a drop in the numbers issued after 1369, which began to rise again in 1373 and exploded in 1374. Data taken from *CPR 1367–70*, *CPR 1370–4*.

⁶⁰ I have counted only two cases for Warwickshire and two for Worcestershire which were transferred from the JPs to King's Bench. The earliest transfer took place at Easter 1374. For Warwickshire see TNA KB 27/453, *Rex*, m. 11 (Easter 1374); KB 27/465, *Rex*, m. 9 (Easter 1377). For Worcestershire: KB 27/456, *Rex*, m. 1 (Hilary 1375); KB 27/461, m. 20 (Easter, 1376).

number of cases brought into the plea side of the King's Bench from the West Midlands, which, judging by the number of membranes in the rolls, was a nation-wide trend.⁶¹ This may explain the lack of activity in local commissions whether special (and inquiry) or permanent (justices of the peace): disputes were being taken directly into King's Bench as civil pleas instead. From Hilary 1374, however, the number of cases from the region appearing in King's Bench dropped quite suddenly, as Gaunt's policy began to take effect.⁶² Lancaster's assault on law and order raises questions: was there mounting disorder locally resulting from the lack of central leadership, and how did this intrusive rule affect the stability of the localities? To answer these questions we need to consider the types and levels of disorder occurring in the West Midlands and how it was dealt with.

Local studies have illuminated the importance of long-running disputes as indicators of problems within the polity. These disruptions to the system were sometimes characterised by violence not just against property, but also against the person. When a dispute did spiral out of control locally it was usually the result of the failure of the resident magnate or the king, or even both, to control the situation. The role of the king's law was to channel aggression which could no longer be contained when problems in the system of local self-regulatory power led to serious disorder. If the king was incapable, or over-partial, then the situation would be exacerbated.⁶³ In the 1370s, the king was largely incapable of rule for long periods. How, then, did the uncertainties at the centre affect the stability of the West Midlands?

The lack of central leadership in the early 1370s is reflected in the rivalries which formed over the Langley inheritance. Both sides looked for aid to different groupings at court, and their relative success and failure appears to have depended on the amount of influence each group had with the king. The Langley family had acquired substantial estates around Milcote, in southern Warwickshire, and a series of properties around Coventry (Pinley, Stivichall, Wyken and Shortley) together with land in Gloucestershire.⁶⁴ In the 1360s the complexities of the inheritance became apparent. These were partly the result of the unusual marital

⁶¹ TNA KB 27/446, 447. In Trinity term 1372, there were eighty-two membranes; in Michaelmas term 1372 there were 147. A rough count of local cases shows that they jumped from eighteen to fifty-three.

⁶² The number of cases from the West Midlands drops from sixty-seven in Michaelmas 1373 to forty-eight in Hilary 1374: TNA KB 27/451, 452.

⁶³ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 29–38, 269–75; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 347–8, 351–4; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 98–101.

⁶⁴ Coss, *The Langley Family*, pp. 4–5.

dealings of the Langley heiress, who had married a second husband, Sir John Trillowe, while her first, Sir John Charlton, was still alive. However, it was not until Joan's death in 1368 that the full range of potential claimants to the inheritance became apparent. Apart from Trillowe's claim through courtesy of England, there were no less than five potential heirs to her lands: Sir John Peyto I of Chesterton (Warwickshire), Sir John Worth, John Langley of Atherstone (Warwickshire), the representative of the cadet branch, Elizabeth Barndesley and Sir Peter Careswell.⁶⁵ Of these, Trillowe, Peyto and Worth were the most active in pursuing their title in the 1370s.

The course of the dispute until *c.* 1375 illuminates the relationship between centre and locality in the period. It also shows that, in Warwick's absence, there were other local lords in Warwickshire to whom the gentry could look for lordship. After Joan's death, John Peyto seized Milcote. His coup was made possible by his close connection to Ralph earl of Stafford, whose landed influence in southern Warwickshire probably enabled Peyto to enforce his rather shaky claim.⁶⁶ In September 1369 Peyto attempted to secure his claim by enfeoffing Milcote to Stafford, Stafford's brother Sir Richard and Alice Perrers, whose combined local and central influence gave Peyto, in theory at least, considerable protection.⁶⁷ By 1371, however, Peyto's position was becoming increasingly insecure. The earl of Stafford was ageing, and Perrers, whilst she had considerable personal influence with the king, had no real landed power in the region with which to support Peyto. As a result, by July 1371 Peyto had lost seisin of Milcote to Trillowe. Peyto died in June 1373, and Trillowe in the following year, still in possession of Milcote. In the subsequent inquisition *post mortem* (in 1374) Elizabeth Barndesley was named as heir, but a second inquisition a year later named Sir John Worth instead.⁶⁸ Worth's success in getting himself named as heir may have been the result of his close connections to the Black Prince, who, even in his illness, still had influence at the centre. Worth's claim was expedited by his links with Sir William Beauchamp, who was a member of the king's household and of the prince's council. In October 1375, just two weeks after being named as heir, Worth was acting with Beauchamp as a mainpernor for one of Beauchamp's closest associates, Sir Lewis Clifford, another member of the prince's household. In May 1377, Worth settled Milcote on himself, with

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–18; it appears that either Joan was abducted or, possibly, she eloped.

⁶⁶ For Stafford's lands: above, pp. 56–7. Peyto was chief steward to Stafford: *CCR* 1369–74, p. 451.

⁶⁷ Coss, *The Langley Family*, pp. 14–18; *CIMisc* 1348–77, pp. 318–19; *CPR* 1370–4, p. 303. The inclusion of a woman as a feoffee is extremely rare in the late medieval period, and demonstrates the scale of Perrers' perceived influence at the centre. For her rise: above, pp. 64–5.

⁶⁸ *CIPM* 1374–7, p. 227.

remainder to his heirs and then Beauchamp and Clifford and their heirs male respectively.⁶⁹ Coss has suggested that the great men of the county could exact a stiff price in return for their protection. In Beauchamp's case it was the reversion of the property in the case of failure in Worth's line. But the relationship between Beauchamp and Worth almost certainly went beyond simple self-interest. With his connections both at the centre and in the locality, the very name of Beauchamp was a powerful tool. It is significant that Worth was able to hold Milcote until his death in 1391, despite repeated attempts at recovery by Sir John Peyto II.⁷⁰

The Milcote dispute demonstrates that, during Warwick's absence, there was a tendency for the Warwickshire gentry to look to other regional magnates, even if one of them was Warwick's own brother. Nevertheless, Warwick's influence, transmitted through the bonds between resident members of his affinity, was still present in local affairs. Beauchamp men continued to look to one another to fulfil the crucial roles of feoffees, witnesses and co-litigants. Equally, lesser men were still prepared to entrust disputed lands to the Beauchamp affinity as the best means of protection. For example, in 1372, a clerk named Charles Blossmenill, who claimed lands and 7 shillings rent in Castle Bromwich (north Warwickshire), used as feoffees a mixture of legal men, among them John Catesby and several of Warwick's men including Henry Arden (who was lord of the manor of Castle Bromwich), John Harewode, Roger Wyrley and Robert Derlaston. The result of this enfeoffment was success for Blossmenill: Arden and his co-feoffees were consistently able to defend their rights to the property.⁷¹ The association of John Catesby with the Beauchamp affinity is particularly significant. Although he was not yet fully attached to Warwick, and was at odds with the earl over manorial rights in Ladbroke, Catesby's status as a man of law was regularly bringing him into contact with the Beauchamp affinity.⁷²

Membership of the Beauchamp affinity did not always guarantee freedom from local disputes, however, especially in Warwick's absence, when there does appear to have been some local disturbance. Take the case of Sir William Bretton, who, despite his close connection to the earl was nevertheless unable to prevent himself being drawn into local conflict.

⁶⁹ *CFR* 1369–77, p. 304; *CPR* 1374–7, p. 460. For Worth, see S. M. Mitchell, 'Some Aspects of the Knightly Household of Richard II' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1998), p. 166 and n. 144. For Beauchamp and Clifford see D. Green, 'The Later Retinue of Edward the Black Prince', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 44 (2000), pp. 148–51.

⁷⁰ Coss, *The Langley Family*, pp. 18–19. For Peyto's attempts at recovery: TNA JUST 1/1486, mm. 11, 16d.; KB 27/472, m. 50. On each attempt judgement went against Peyto, or he defaulted. Peyto also sought the help of Gaunt: below, p. 95.

⁷¹ TNA JUST 1/1480, m. 15d.; JUST 1/1481, m. 7; [Appendix 1](#).

⁷² Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 311; below, pp. 115–17.

Resident at Packwood, and with a temporary claim to Olton, Bretton was a near neighbour of the Hore family of Solihull and Elmdon, who, like their fifteenth-century descendants, were highly litigious and troublesome.⁷³ They appear to have belonged to the new class of legal ‘professionals’ who had a tendency to disrupt local order because the profits of law enabled them to buy into local landed society. They then used their legal expertise to defend their rights. From the abundant surviving evidence it appears that the Hores were particularly active in the land market in the Solihull region, and that they generated more than their fair share of trouble in the area.⁷⁴

Bretton’s initial involvement in the affairs of Solihull had begun by January 1370 when he acted as a witness called on behalf of Thomas Hore in a loveday concerning a dispute with Richard Whitacre over land and access to a common way in nearby Elmdon. The proceedings were decided in favour of Hore.⁷⁵ But unfortunately for Bretton and the stability of the Solihull area as a whole, the loveday did not produce a lasting settlement. In 1371 there were further attacks on Whitacre’s land at Elmdon, and in 1372 Hore was once more suing Whitacre and others for trespass.⁷⁶ By Michaelmas 1373, Bretton himself had been drawn into the dispute, by now as Hore’s adversary, when Hore brought a plea of trespass against him, claiming that Bretton and five associates had broken into Hore’s house at Solihull. In 1374, Bretton retaliated by bringing a successful assize of novel disseisin against Hore concerning land in Solihull (possibly Olton).⁷⁷ By this time, the dispute seems to have unsettled the region more generally, since a spate of cases from Solihull appeared in King’s Bench in 1374.⁷⁸ A new attempt to solve the dispute in the summer of that year led to Hore being put under a bond of £20, but this only led to further altercations in the law courts. Bretton sued Hore for debt, whilst Hore retaliated by claiming that he had only entered the bond under duress after he had been held hostage at Packwood by Bretton.⁷⁹ Eventually a solution was reached,

⁷³ In 1371, Bretton was holding Olton in Solihull for 1¼ years with reversion to John Grey: *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 55; an indictment of 1378 said that he had a house at nearby Packwood: TNA KB 27/468, m. 35d. For the Hores in the fifteenth century, see Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 370–1.

⁷⁴ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 123–5. A good example of this type is John Catesby: his opponents claimed that they were unable to get justice because of ‘lez subtiles et cautyles de le dit John ad en la ley’: Post, ‘Ladbroke Dispute’, p. 332. For some of the many transactions involving the Hores: CAD i, pp. 451, 485, 523; CAD ii, p. 340.

⁷⁵ CAD ii, pp. 450, 566. Whitacre was lord of Elmdon: *VCH Warwks.* iv, p. 67.

⁷⁶ TNA CP 40/444, m. 627; KB 27/446, m. 61.

⁷⁷ TNA KB 27/451, mm. 120, 319–20; JUST 1/1481, m. 6.

⁷⁸ These cases all appear in Hilary 1374: TNA KB 27/452, mm. 73d., 39d.

⁷⁹ TNA KB 27/468, m. 35d. The case was heard at *nisi prius* in July 1376, when it was found for Bretton.

when Hore was bound under statute staple of £40 to John Catesby and Thomas Purfrey. It is possible that Warwick's return to England in 1375 facilitated this agreement. The situation was probably eased by Bretton's death in 1378, when his widow, advised by members of the Beauchamp affinity, released Hore from his bond, although Hore continued to sue Bretton's associates into the 1390s.⁸⁰

In Worcestershire, meanwhile, Warwick's almost complete dominance of local politics meant that the course and outcome of disputes in the shire were very different. The presence of so many franchises, including Warwick's right as sheriff to use the tourn as a court of first instance, seems to have had a dampening effect on the amount of litigation reaching the central courts. This is not to suggest that disorder or complaints about local lordship were simply suppressed or ignored. Whilst some cases may have been suppressed by the holders of the franchises, the growing equitable jurisdictions of chancery, the king's council and parliament offered other routes for disgruntled petitioners.⁸¹ Such petitions exist for Warwickshire; there are none surviving for Worcestershire, which supports the impression that Worcestershire was indeed generally less troubled by long-term or violent disputes over land. In part, this was the result of Warwick's ability to keep the peace on a county-wide basis through the shrievalty combined with the fact that, until the 1390s, there were no rival influences which could disrupt or challenge his rule.⁸²

Worcestershire was not entirely immune from disruption, however. As in the Milcote affair, disturbances may have been caused or influenced at the centre. In the early 1370s the actions of Percival and Thomas Walssh and their kinsmen were the subject of frequent litigation by a wide cross-section of Worcestershire society including Warwick himself.⁸³ There were several branches of the Walssh family in the region: Percival and Thomas were younger brothers of John Walssh of Sheldesley Walsh, which was situated in the far north-west of the county.⁸⁴ This was

⁸⁰ CAD vi, p. 102. Bretton's widow was advised by Robert Normanton, William Barewell and John Burnell, together with John Catesby. The case was finally concluded in 1395: TNA KB 27/519, m. 65d.

⁸¹ J. F. Baldwin, *The King's Council in England during the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1913), pp. 130–8; M. E. Avery, 'The History of the Equitable Jurisdiction of Chancery before 1460', *BIHR*, 42 (1969), pp. 132–4; Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 20–8.

⁸² Above, pp. 44–5; see [Chapter 4](#).

⁸³ Apart from a plea of debt for non-payment of rent brought by the Beauchamps, the Walshes were also alleged to have assaulted a monk at Evesham Abbey and to have attacked Warwick's manor of Shrawley: TNA CP 40/436, m. 239d.; CP 40/444, m. 193; CP 40/452, m. 208.

⁸⁴ Thomas was described as brother of John and heir to his manor in 1383: *CFR* 1383–91, pp. 4–5. Thomas is in turn described as Percival's brother in a suit brought in 1369: TNA KB 28/432, m. 50d. For the north-west of Worcestershire and its relationship to Marcher politics: above, pp. 38–9.

in the region furthest away from Warwick's main bloc of lands but close enough to the border with Herefordshire to be drawn into the politics of that county. The Walsshes looked to members of the Herefordshire gentry, in particular John and Walter Devereux, who had links to the Black Prince.⁸⁵ These links may explain the grant in May 1374 to Percival Walssh of the custody of the alien priory of Astley (north Worcestershire), which lay very close to the Walsshes' estates.⁸⁶

Despite his apparently shaky relationship with Warwick, Percival Walssh was included in the earl's war retinue in 1373.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, the tactic of removing a troublemaker from the region and channelling his violent instincts against the French failed to work in Walssh's case. Within a year of his return to England in 1374, Walssh was in trouble again: this may well be linked to Gaunt's increasingly direct involvement in central government at this time. Just one month after Walssh had been granted custody of Astley, a commission of inquiry was issued to investigate waste by him at the priory.⁸⁸ It seems that Walssh reacted violently and Warwick himself decided to intervene directly. In April 1375, just before his departure on campaign, the earl made his first definite appearance as a JP in Worcestershire, along with a considerable proportion (two-thirds) of the county bench.⁸⁹ Evidently, Walssh's crimes were serious enough to warrant an indictment before the combined political and social might of Warwick and his fellow JPs. Although the earliest offences dated back to 1368, the most recent and that recounted in the greatest detail seems to have been the result of trouble at Astley in March 1375. Walssh, his wife and son were accused of entering the house of one John Galewey at Astley, of threatening Galewey with a knife, and, in a separate incident, of throwing Galewey's wife into the mill pond. The Walssh case was one of the few from Worcestershire to be removed to King's Bench; evidently, the central authorities – and, in the light of his policy towards local order, perhaps Gaunt himself – were equally keen to make an example of the Walsshes. Despite these displays of authority, however, the north-west of Worcestershire continued to be disturbed, suggesting that Warwick was having difficulty in controlling this, for him, rather remote region. In 1380, a second inquiry had to be

⁸⁵ The Devereux were closely linked to their kinsman John Lord Devereux, a friend of the Black Prince: *HP* II, pp. 782–4. In 1371, Thomas Walssh was granted the marriage of his near neighbour, Walter Ribbesford; Walter Devereux stood surety for him: *CFR* 1369–77, p. 124.

⁸⁶ *CFR* 1369–77, p. 246.

⁸⁷ TNA E 101/32/39; Henry V used this tactic to remove troublemakers from the localities: Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 232–40.

⁸⁸ *CPR* 1370–4, p. 483.

⁸⁹ TNA KB 27/461, Rex, m. 20. The active JPs on this occasion were Warwick, John Botetourt, Henry Ardern, Henry Bruyn, Robert Burgulon and John atte Wode.

issued concerning theft of goods from Astley, a theft which may also have been the work of the Walsshes.⁹⁰

Until the first truce in 1375, therefore, Warwick's contacts with the West Midlands were, of necessity, rather limited, and this had the same deleterious effects, although his absence did not entirely negate his, or his affinity's, influence in the region, especially in Worcestershire. As we have seen, the gap in Warwickshire politics was filled by Gaunt, whose landed predominance and influence at the centre propped up the regime in the absence of an active king, although his influence was less direct during his absence before 1374.⁹¹ As already noted, the key to Gaunt's local power was his ability to influence Warwickshire politics from Leicestershire, which was enhanced by his power base at Kenilworth Castle. Following the death of the Black Prince, from 1376, Gaunt was able to combine his inherited lands with the influence available from the royal patrimony at nearby Coventry.⁹² There are signs, however, that both the uncertainties at the centre and the power vacuum locally were causing tensions; the disorder involving the Walsshes, and the dispute between Peyto and Worth over Milcote were, it seems, fuelled by the vagaries of factional politics at the centre, as different groupings sought influence with the king. It may be as a result of problems such as these that Gaunt decided to take full charge in 1374 and implement a firm policy against local disorder. While this suggests a more purposeful attitude to internal rule than the duke is usually credited with, he could not prevent the backlash against the regime in 1376, caused primarily by failure in war and the perceived wastage of parliamentary subsidies.⁹³ The truce of 1375 and the Good Parliament in the following year marked a turning point in the politics of the West Midlands because they were the moments from which Warwick entered national and local politics. Whilst Warwick was not directly involved in the rule of the West Midlands, there was little he could do to prevent Gaunt's intrusion. But once the earl returned to England for good in 1375 he was presented with a situation in which Gaunt was firmly in charge of central government and was using this 'public' authority to enhance his 'private' influence in Warwickshire. Warwick may have perceived the duke's influence in the West Midlands as a threat, and it is possible that his subsequent attempts to assert his authority in Warwickshire were partly in response to his need to counter Gaunt's power there. If this was the case, his tactics were unfortunate, because they precipitated a sharp increase in local disorder.

⁹⁰ *CPR 1377-80*, p. 575. ⁹¹ Above, pp. 68-9. ⁹² Above, pp. 70-4.

⁹³ Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 195-8.

Warwick was already active in the Good Parliament as a member of the Lords' intercommuning committee. Thereafter, his activity in central politics increased. Already in his late thirties, he may have begun to assume the role of an elder statesman, although, as we shall see shortly, his exercise of his local lordship was not always in keeping with such an august position. Although he was not appointed to the continual council imposed by the 1376 parliament, his interest in domestic politics was reflected in the appointments he received between 1376 and 1382.⁹⁴ In the parliaments of January and October 1377 he was again a member of the Lords' intercommuning committee. He was also a member of the parliamentary commissions appointed to inquire into the royal finances and household in 1379, 1380 and 1381.⁹⁵ Finally, Walsingham says that in 1379 Warwick was chosen as governor to the young king. As with his appointment to the commissions of inquiry, there is no evidence to show that the earl was ever active in any of these roles. Even if the chronicler's statement cannot be corroborated, however, it probably reflects the position held by Warwick during this period as one of the senior members of the regime.⁹⁶

Before looking at the effect of his return on the politics of the West Midlands, we need to look at events in national politics following the Good Parliament. In the aftermath of the parliament, John of Gaunt was reversing the damage inflicted by the Commons on the circle around the king. At the same time, the death of the Black Prince in June 1376 crystallised the succession to the throne. It was now clear that Edward III would be succeeded by a minor, and that the men who would be in control of executive power would be Richard's uncles, especially Gaunt. Since Thomas of Woodstock was now of age, he could expect an increasingly active role in government.⁹⁷ Ormrod has suggested that in the last few months of the reign a concerted effort was made by Gaunt and others

⁹⁴ As warden of Guernsey, he took responsibility for its defence, and may have been there in July 1376. In December 1377 he was appointed admiral of the northern fleet. In November 1376 and February 1377 Warwick was one of a group of nobles appointed to hear a case referred from the court marshal to the king's council because the king was unable to do it himself. Also in November 1376, Warwick was commissioned to hear and determine cases of piracy: *CPR* 1374–7, pp. 307, 410, 415; *GEC* xii, pp. 375–8.

⁹⁵ *RP* ii, pp. 363–4; iii, pp. 5, 57, 73–5, 101. He was also regularly appointed as a trier of English petitions in parliament, which re-inforces the idea that he was considered to be a senior member of government: G. Dodd, *Justice and Grace: Private Petitioning and the English Parliament in the Late Middle Ages*, (Oxford, 2007), pp. 98–100.

⁹⁶ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* ii, pp. 427–8; *GEC* xii, pp. 375–8. There is no record of this request or Warwick's appointments in the records of parliament, however: *RP* iii, pp. 55–71.

⁹⁷ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 394–7; Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 159–86. Woodstock's emergence was marked belatedly in 1377 when he was created earl of Buckingham at Richard's coronation. To avoid confusion he will be referred to as 'Woodstock', or by his later title, Gloucester: Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 5–6.

close to Edward III to heal the discord created by the king's incapacity for the sake of political stability at a time of monarchical weakness. From Richard's accession, the fiction was maintained that he was ruling as well as reigning, whilst government was overseen by a series of continual councils between 1377 and 1380.⁹⁸ Although neither Gaunt nor Woodstock was appointed to these councils, this is not now taken as a sign that they were excluded from governance. Rather, it seems that their influence was to be asserted through less institutionalised means: their private position as the king's uncles and as landed magnates.⁹⁹ The situation was further complicated by the lack of an 'official' minority. Since there was no official start to the minority, there could be no official end to it. This was to have serious consequences for the balance of power in the 1380s. With no clear-cut signal that Richard was of an age to take control of government, the transfer of power happened gradually and messily. His uncles' position, meanwhile, became increasingly ambiguous. Unlike councillors, they could not be dismissed at will and would retain influence over government until it became clear that Richard was prepared to tolerate what he saw as their interference no longer.¹⁰⁰ The political conditions and some of Warwick's problems in his local rule from 1376 to c. 1382 are best interpreted in the light of these problems at the centre.

Warwick's return to England had an immediate impact on local affairs in the West Midlands. From 1375, members of his affinity received regular appointments to office in Warwickshire: Sir William Bretton was pricked as sheriff in 1375, and Sir Richard Herthill in 1376. They were followed in the office by John and Thomas Bermyngeham (1378 and 1381). Warwick had to share power with Gaunt, however, as the latter continued to influence Warwickshire politics from Leicestershire: William Flamville was escheator in 1376 and sheriff in 1379, and Sir Roger Perewych of Lubenham (Leicestershire), who was retained by Gaunt in 1382, was made sheriff in 1377.¹⁰¹ It was in these years that Warwick also began to consolidate and build up his local following for the first time. In August

⁹⁸ Ormrod, *Reign of Edward III*, pp. 119–20; N. B. Lewis, 'The "Continual Council" in the Early Years of Richard II, 1377–80', *EHR*, 41 (1926), 246–51; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 399–402; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 33–48; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 28–31.

⁹⁹ Lewis, for example, assumes that Gaunt's absence from the councils was an attempt to exclude him from government; Lewis, 'Continual Council', pp. 248–9. This view is corrected by Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 33–5.

¹⁰⁰ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 33–57. Richard's situation seems to be an extreme example of being able to choose his friends, but not his family: below, pp. 99–101.

¹⁰¹ *LEI* 9, p. 145; *List of Escheators*, p. 168; Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', p. 153. Perewych was retained by Gaunt without a fee or the expectation of serving abroad: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 15–16, 277. Again there is evidence of links amongst this Leicestershire grouping: Flamville witnessed Perewych's will: *HP* IV, pp. 59–60; for Herthill and Bretton, see [Appendix 1](#).

1375 he ensured that the manor of Spennall, which lay in the heartland of his estates in western Warwickshire, was acquired by his war retainer William Durvassall, alias Spennore. Spennall was held from the earl himself, and the close involvement of the Beauchamp affinity as feoffees and witnesses to the grant suggests that the settlement was made with Warwick's explicit backing.¹⁰² With a similar intention, but on a much larger scale, Warwick made the grant already cited of the greater part of the Mountford of Beaudesert inheritance to his brother William in 1376; the grant was witnessed, and so reinforced locally, by the most prominent members of Warwick's affinity.¹⁰³ Warwick also began to formalise his links with the local gentry; the earliest known surviving indenture of a retainer for life by the earl of his esquire Thomas Archer dates from March 1378.¹⁰⁴ In 1377, 1380 and 1383 the social contacts between Warwick and his retinue were further strengthened and confirmed by joint admission of Warwick, his wife and some of these into the fraternity of St Albans.¹⁰⁵ Finally, Warwick began to take an active interest in extending his landed inheritance. Although the Beauchamp Cartulary probably did not preserve every transaction in which Warwick was involved, it does show a distinct increase in Warwick's dealings in property in the region from September 1375. At first, he concentrated his attention on acquiring small portions of land in and around Warwick, and, to a lesser extent, in Stratford. He was also careful to acquire confirmation of transactions carried out by his father.¹⁰⁶

Warwick was inexperienced as a local lord, however, and in his eagerness to exert his personal authority over the West Midlands through his affinity, he crossed the unspoken line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, forcing the government to take direct action. In the period of Edward III's senility and Richard II's minority, government intervention was synonymous with Gaunt's intervention, against whose influence Warwick may have been reacting in the first place. Since there

¹⁰² SBT ER 1/61, no. 5. The feoffee was William Spyney, and the grant was witnessed by John Rous, John Morehall, Guy Spyney, Peter Holt and Thomas Holt; *VCH Warwicks.* III, p. 172; below, pp. 84–6. For Warwick's estates: above, pp. 42–5.

¹⁰³ BL Ct. Ch. xi 70: witnessed by Henry Arden, William Bretton, Thomas Bermyngeham, John Morehall, John Wyard, William Spennore: above, pp. 41–2.

¹⁰⁴ SBT DR 37/Box 56.

¹⁰⁵ BL Cotton MS Nero D VIII, fols. 129v, 131r, 132r. Admitted with Warwick, 1377: Sir William Beauchamp, Nicholas Lyllyng, Thomas Bermyngeham, William Bagot, John Danyel, William Wenlok, William Spennore, Peter Holt. Admitted with the countess, 1380: Henry and Thomas Arden, Nicholas Trymenell, Roger Tangele, Eleanor Arden (wife of Henry). Admitted at the request of Warwick and his wife, 1383: Isabella Lyllyng, William Cokesey.

¹⁰⁶ For example, quitclaim of Moreton Morrell (bought by Earl Thomas I), March 1378: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 16v; purchases in Warwick, December 1376, February 1378: fols. 83r, 84v; in Stratford, January 1377: fol. 83r; above, pp. 41–6.

was no direct recourse to the ultimate authority of the king, Lancaster's intervention did little to alleviate local tensions.

The first incident to draw the attention of the ruling regime to the activities of the Beauchamp affinity occurred in the summer of 1376. In August, the abbot of Evesham was taken into the king's special protection and assigned a sergeant-at-arms to act as a bodyguard. The abbot had appealed to the king after a series of attacks by a group of men (or so the abbot claimed), one of whose ringleaders was John Mountford of Warwick, a lifelong member of the Beauchamp affinity. It seems that the malefactors enjoyed themselves at the abbot's expense, since they were accused of drinking three tuns of wine.¹⁰⁷ The origins of this dispute can be found in a grant issued in July 1376 for the abbey to impark 300 acres of land at Ombersley, which lay very close to Warwick's demesne manor of Salwarpe in the heart of the Beauchamp estates.¹⁰⁸ Although there was an ancient history of rivalry between the Beauchamps and the abbey, this incident seems to have been more serious than most. It attracted the attention of the chronicler Walsingham, who claimed that Warwick's involvement was a source of embarrassment to the newly formed continual council, of which he was a member. Holmes has even suggested that this incident may have weakened the council's credibility.¹⁰⁹ There is some confusion in these statements, however, since Warwick had not been appointed to the continual council. Even so, the direct involvement of the king (or, more accurately, Gaunt on behalf of the king) was unusual, and suggests that the dispute could no longer be contained locally because Warwick had gone too far in the assertion of his lordship.

The Ombersley incident was only the first of a series of occasions on which reports of regional disputes involving Warwick and his men reached the ears of the central administration and in which Gaunt used his 'public' and 'private' power and influence to intervene. The settlement of Spernall on William Spernore in mid 1375 brought an immediate response from Spernore's relatives, Richard and Rose Mountford, who claimed the manor for themselves. The Mountfords' claim to Spernall was the result of Rose's first marriage to Spernore's brother, Nicholas, which had produced two daughters.¹¹⁰ Rose's claim was strengthened by a previous settlement of the property made in 1362–3, which had entailed the manor on William and Nicholas' mother, Sybil, for her life, with remainder to the heirs of her

¹⁰⁷ CPR 1374–7, p. 330. Many of the details of this attack, including Mountford's involvement, come from the indictments brought by the persistent abbot in 1397–8, which means that his claims must be treated with caution: TNA KB 27/548, Rex, m. 7. For Mountford, see [Appendix 1](#).

¹⁰⁸ CPR 1374–7, p. 296; above, pp. 40–4.

¹⁰⁹ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* 1, p. 322; Holmes, *Good Parliament*, p. 159.

¹¹⁰ TNA CP 40/460, m. 87d.; CAD v, p. 556; above, pp. 81–2.

body and the right heirs of her husband John. It seems that this settlement may have been sanctioned by Earl Thomas I, since several members of the Beauchamp affinity appear as witnesses to it.¹¹¹ Thus, William Spnore's claim seems to have rested almost entirely on the favour of the new earl, who was apparently disregarding his own father's preferences. Spnore's adoption of his topographical surname around the time of his dispute with the Mountfords may have been an attempt to identify himself more closely with the inheritance of which he was so uncertain.¹¹²

Shortly after the Mountfords' initial challenge to Spnore, Richard Mountford died, but his wife, Rose, pursued the case doggedly, using all available routes in order to ensure her case was heard. In c. 1377, she brought an assize of novel disseisin against Spnore, claiming custody of the manor on behalf of her daughters by Nicholas Durvassall, who were still minors. Her case was based on the fact that her new husband, Richard, had bought the custody and marriages of the heirs, together with custody of Spnall, from Henry Ardern of Park Hall in Castle Bromwich (Warwickshire), another member of Warwick's affinity.¹¹³ Evidently, Rose did not receive redress, and by late 1377 the dispute had escalated beyond Warwick's control. In the parliament of October 1377, Rose brought a petition, alleging that Spnore had forcibly disseised her of the manor. When she attempted to bring an assize against him, she claimed that he appeared at the sessions with a large number of armed men who menaced the judges so that no verdict could be reached. Rose also claimed that Spnore had been maintained by Ardern.¹¹⁴ If Ardern had originally sold the rights to the inheritance to the Mountfords, then his subsequent support for Spnore's claim may have been the result of a change in policy towards the inheritance precipitated by Warwick's return to England. Warwick was overriding the 1362–3 settlement in favour of one of his most trusted retainers, but this policy had a price. In 1373, Richard Mountford had been closely involved with Warwick in the foundation of a chantry at Lapworth, but the earl's support for Spnore alienated Mountford and his wife, who turned instead to the Lancastrian affinity for help.¹¹⁵

Rose's appeal to central authority was successful. Ardern and Spnore were summoned to appear before the council on pain of £300. In

¹¹¹ WCRO CR 1998/38/BB 8; the quitclaim was made by William Spyney (who later quitclaimed the manor to William Spnore), and was witnessed by John Morehall, John Rous, Peter Holt and William atte Wode. Rous, Morehall and Holt all witnessed the 1375 settlement as well.

¹¹² Spnore seems to have adopted his surname in c. 1378; he was still being referred to as 'Durvassall' in that year, but after this he appears in the records under his alias: *CPR 1377–81*, p. 131.

¹¹³ Ardern had been granted Park Hall by John Lord Botetourt by 1373: *VCH Warwks.* iv, p. 45. For his service to Warwick, see [Appendix 1](#). No record of the assize survives except in Rose's parliamentary petition: TNA SC 8/125/6215.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. ¹¹⁵ BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r.

February 1378, Spernore was placed under a mainprise not to harm Rose. In the same month, a special commission of inquiry was issued into Spernore's activities at the assizes. As we have seen, the use of commissions of inquiry was a powerful tool in local disputes.¹¹⁶ The personnel of the commission are equally revealing.¹¹⁷ No Beauchamp man was used. Instead, the government turned to two men with links to Gaunt, John Dodyngselles and John Deyncourt, neither of whom had previously been appointed to office in Warwickshire, although both held lands in the county.¹¹⁸ Was Rose Mountford appealing to Gaunt as both a rival source of power locally and the most influential person at the centre in order to combat Warwick's influence and perhaps also his disruptiveness? Or did the impetus come from Gaunt and the central government in an attempt to neutralise Warwick's power? Unfortunately, no trace of the return of the inquiry remains, but it seems that a compromise was reached, perhaps as a result of Gaunt's intervention. There were no more complaints from Rose, and Spernore continued in his possession of the manor for life, but with remainder to the daughters of Nicholas Durvassall and their heirs. In 1383, one of these daughters, Eleanor, who was now married to John Holt, brought an assize of novel disseisin against Spernore and his associates, but this may have been a collusive action in order to ensure the terms of the settlement were entered in the judicial rolls.¹¹⁹ By this date the relationship between the Mountfords and Gaunt had solidified. Eleanor's husband, John Holt, was the nephew of the William Bagot, who, as we shall see, had also moved into Lancastrian service by this date, and whose sister had married Holt's father. Similarly, Rose Mountford's kinsman by marriage, Baldwin Mountford, was granted an annuity by Gaunt in 1382.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ CPR 1377–81, p. 131; CCR 1377–81, p. 117; Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 62–3; discussed above, pp. 25–6.

¹¹⁷ The commissioners were: Roger Kirketon (assize justice), John Dodyngselles, John Deyncourt.

¹¹⁸ Deyncourt was parker at Kenilworth Castle in 1372 and 1374, and constable there by 1382; he was retained by Gaunt between 1382 and 1392. He had married Margaret, the widow of Roger Cuyly, before the 1380s, and through her acquired Ansty manor: *John of Gaunt's Register*, 1371–75, I, pp. 88, 236, 239; *John of Gaunt's Register*, 1379–83, ed. E. C. Lodge and R. Somerville (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., 56–7, 1937), II, pp. 216, 278; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 268; CCR 1381–5, p. 524; CIPM 1384–92, p. 42; *VCH Warrwks.* VIII, p. 43. Dodyngselles was retained by Gaunt from 1374 to his death in 1380. His main lands in Warwickshire were at Long Itchington: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 276; *VCH Warrwks.* VI, pp. 125–6.

¹¹⁹ TNA JUST 1/1504, m. 43d.; CFR 1399–1405, p. 146.

¹²⁰ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 275. The Mountford–Bagot–Lancaster connection was already active in 1379, when Baldwin Mountford witnessed a quitclaim to Bagot with several other men who were already, or were soon to become, Lancastrian retainers, including Ralph Bracebrugge (retained, 1385), John Pecche and John Peyto (both retained 1382): SBT ER 1/65 no. 458; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 265, 277. For his move into the Lancastrian affinity, see below, pp. 87–8, 95. Gaunt was later to become involved in the Aston dispute on behalf of the Holts: below, pp. 177–8.

Also in 1377, both the Beauchamp and Lancastrian affinities became involved in another unsavoury incident. In that year, Juliana Vernon, the widow of Sir Richard Vernon of Derbyshire, sued out two commissions of oyer and terminer against Sir William Bagot and Thomas Maundeville of Countesthorpe (Leicestershire). The first commission, issued in March, claimed that Bagot and Maundeville had attacked and imprisoned the widow at Potterspury (Warwick's manor in Northamptonshire), before taking her to Warwick Castle itself. The second commission in November was issued by the new regime under Richard II. The complaint against Bagot and Maundeville was the same, but now the names of twenty other people were added, including 'Geoffrey the earl's servant', William Barewell (Warwick's receiver-general) and the servant of John Daniel, Warwick's chamberlain.¹²¹ In the mind of the petitioner and the government there was no doubt as to who was behind the abduction: the Beauchamp affinity, with the tacit backing of Warwick himself.

The two ringleaders named in this affair were William Bagot and Thomas Maundeville. Bagot had been linked to the Beauchamp affinity since at least 1373 and had not yet left Warwick's service. He was amongst those most-favoured members of Warwick's retinue who were admitted to the fraternity at St Albans with the earl in early 1377.¹²² Maundeville, however, was a member of the Lancastrian affinity, who had married a Leicestershire heiress.¹²³ Possibly, Bagot's and Maundeville's intentions were marital, since Juliana claimed that she had taken a vow of chastity before the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield prior to her abduction. Subsequently, she married a Lancastrian retainer, Thomas Wennesley, so perhaps Bagot and Maundeville were acting in conjunction on behalf of the Lancastrian interest.¹²⁴ Maundeville's presence may also be a sign that Bagot was already moving towards an association with Gaunt which was formalised in 1382. The deed evidence from this period supports this impression: increasingly, Bagot was calling upon members of the Lancastrian affinity to act as witnesses and feoffees.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the fact that Juliana Vernon was abducted from Warwick's manor and taken to Warwick Castle by a group of men with links to the earl does suggest that Bagot was still linked closely with Warwick, since it is unlikely that

¹²¹ CPR 1374–7, p. 494; CPR 1377–81, p. 89; Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, p. 137. Juliana came from the Leicestershire family of Pembrugge: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', p. 341.

¹²² TNA E 101/32/39; above, pp. 82–3.

¹²³ Maundeville was Gaunt's retainer from 1372 to 1399. In 1373–4, he was in Warwick's war retinue: HP III, pp. 675–6; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 274; CPR 1377–81, p. 507; TNA E 101/32/39.

¹²⁴ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 110.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 263. See above, n. 120, for Bagot's use of members of the Lancastrian affinity as witnesses. The earliest direct link between Bagot and the duke dates from October 1379, when Bagot leased the parsonage of Pattingham from Gaunt: *John of Gaunt's Register*, 1379–83, II, p. 314.

she would have been taken there without the earl's approval. The most likely explanation for these events is that Warwick and Lancaster may initially have co-operated in this illegal act but that when the situation got out of control, it was Warwick and his men, especially Bagot, who were blamed. Certainly, the Vernon affair marked the end of Bagot's association with Warwick, which, in turn, encouraged Bagot to seek lordship from Lancaster. Of course, it may be possible that the guilt of the Beauchamp affinity was emphasised to exculpate Gaunt's men. The incident certainly suggests that both Warwick and Lancaster were having difficulty in controlling the actions of their retainers. Nevertheless, Warwick's influence at the centre was enough for him to ensure that the personnel of the commissions of oyer and terminer were favourable to him, especially the second commission, which featured at least three of his retainers.¹²⁶ Not surprisingly, no more was heard of the incident, although in 1382 Bagot, with a group of men from Coventry, sued Juliana for debt.¹²⁷

This litany of disputes and disruption in Warwickshire involving members of the Beauchamp affinity reached a climax in 1378–9. The complaint this time came from Agnes Morehall, the widow of John, a member of the Beauchamp affinity, who had held the manor of Morehall from the earl.¹²⁸ Agnes petitioned the king, claiming that the manor had been settled on her and John in tail male, with remainders to one Thomas Morehall, also in tail male.¹²⁹ After John's death, Agnes claimed, Thomas ignored the protection of the king, and, with fifteen other men, seized Morehall, expelled Agnes and her children and took goods worth £200. Thomas' accomplices, according to Agnes, included William Spernore, Guy Spyney and Peter Holt, all leading members of the Beauchamp

¹²⁶ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 89. The commissioners were: March 1377: William Burgh (Gaunt's steward at Leicester), John Cavendish (CJKB), John Clinton, Walter Cokesey (Warwick's retainer), William Flamville (escheator), John Holt (assize justice, feed by Gaunt, 1382: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 272), Roger Kirketon (assize justice), William Trussell (king's knight: *CPR 1377–81*, p. 153); November, 1377: Henry Arden (Warwick), Thomas Bermyngeham (Warwick), William Bretton (Warwick), Baldwin Freville (king's knight), Roger Kirketon, Richard Stafford, William Skipwith (assize justice).

¹²⁷ *TNA CP 40/484*, m. 148. ¹²⁸ *VCH Warwks.* III, p. 190; [Appendix 1](#).

¹²⁹ It is unclear what Thomas' relationship was to John and Agnes; the petition in Chancery suggests that he was John's son. If this is the case, then the whole settlement was legally dubious, since Thomas would have been passed over in favour of John's children with Agnes. This is a strong possibility, as Agnes was the daughter of a knight, Sir Walter Beisyn, who may have had enough influence over the non-armigerous Morehalls to ensure a favourable settlement for his daughter. However, in the original grant of 1378/9, Thomas Morehall is mentioned as having the reversion of the property after John and Agnes' children, but there is no mention of his relationship to John and Agnes: *TNA SC 8/222/11100*; *SBT ER* 1/61, no. 37; *VCH Warwks.* III, p. 190. The dispute was eventually settled peacefully and to the earl's satisfaction when John and Agnes' daughter and heiress married the Beauchamp man, Thomas Crewe: *HP II*, pp. 691–3; [Appendix II A](#).

affinity. Agnes requested the king to send a sergeant-at-arms to arrest the ringleaders and for a commission of inquiry to be issued to unearth the rest of the malefactors.

Although Agnes' petition was not granted (she was told to seek remedy in chancery), the involvement of Warwick's men in yet another incident forced the government to act. New commissions of the peace were issued in February 1379 for both Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Warwick was omitted from both, as were most of his affinity. The Warwickshire bench was headed for the first and only time by the earl of Stafford. Two of Stafford's kinsmen, Richard and Thomas Stafford, were also appointed. Since Warwick and Stafford were on good terms, Warwick could be sure that his interests were safeguarded.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, his exclusion was a pointed snub. Central influence was increased through the appointment of two other new figures: Baldwin Freville II, who was a king's knight in 1379, and the Lancastrian retainer John Dodyngselles.¹³¹ In Worcestershire, Warwick's influence was still present on the bench through Richard Fyton and Walter Cokesey, but they were balanced by two men with connections to the court and central administration, John atte Wode and John Cassy. The only magnate on the Worcestershire bench was now John Botetourt.¹³² It is certainly possible that Warwick's removal resulted from his appointment as governor to the king.¹³³ But considering his record in local government from 1376, and the complete alteration in the personnel of the Warwickshire bench, it is more likely that his temporary removal was a central reaction to his local mismanagement.¹³⁴ Warwick was still a prominent figure in central politics, as his appointments to the financial commissions of 1379–81 show, but his initial attempts at local rule led to a spate of incidents which did little to promote order in the region.¹³⁵

Undoubtedly, Warwick's arrival in the region and his over-assertive conduct contributed to the rise in the number of commissions of inquiry

¹³⁰ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 312. The full commission was: Hugh earl of Stafford, John Clinton, John Catesby, John Dodyngselles, Baldwin Freville, Richard Stafford, Thomas Stafford. For Warwick and Stafford's relationship, above, pp. 56–7.

¹³¹ For Freville, see Mitchell, 'Knightly Household of Richard II', p. 233. For Dodyngselles: above, p. 86, n. 118.

¹³² *CPR 1377–81*, p. 312. The full commission was: John Botetourt, John Cassy (assize justice), Walter Cokesey, Richard Fyton, John atte Wode; atte Wode was a long-serving member of the royal household from 1354 and had been used in local office before, for example on a commission of oyer and terminer in 1367, and as keeper of Feckenham Forest before 1371: *CPR 1367–70*, pp. 62, 338; Driver, 'Knights of the Shire II', pp. 20–1.

¹³³ Above, p. 81.

¹³⁴ These changes were definitely not part of a national reform programme: the only other peace commission to be reissued at this time was one for Lincolnshire. It is fairly certain, therefore, that the shake-up was aimed at Warwick and his affinity.

¹³⁵ Above, pp. 81–2.

and oyer and terminer which were issued after 1374. But the increasing use of these commissions in the West Midlands was also intimately related to the shift in the governmental attitude towards local law and order noted above, which was linked to Gaunt's decision to take personal control of the regime in that year.¹³⁶ Although Lancaster's interference, both as a private lord and in his more public aspect as the king's representative, may have succeeded in quelling some of Warwick's excesses, the intrusive nature of his policy may also have contributed both to Warwick's frustration at his lack of ultimate redress and thus to the tensions in the region at large.

Gaunt's policy towards the judicial system also had another aspect, which was related to his determination to protect royal rights and privileges. In part, his policy stemmed from the changing role of the crown in the region following Richard's inheritance of the Black Prince's patrimony in 1376. When Richard inherited the throne a year later, this patrimony, which since its creation had been in the hands of the king's eldest son, became royal property.¹³⁷ Since the king now had landed interests in the region, but was not often on hand to deal personally with any problems that might arise, commissions of inquiry and oyer and terminer were used as an expedient measure. But this alone does not explain the sudden increase in their use in the region. An examination of the stated aims and nature of these commissions suggests that from 1376–7, those around the king, led by Gaunt, adopted a rigorous policy towards the crown's rights and possessions, particularly those related to Coventry and the royal forest of Feckenham, which only led to further tensions locally.

Although Feckenham was a royal forest, it lay within the region where Warwick's influence was at its strongest. The Beauchamp interest in the forest and its surrounds was further strengthened by the life appointment of Sir William Beauchamp as keeper of the forest in November 1377.¹³⁸ Considering that the Beauchamps were undoubtedly the dominant magnates in the county, they would have expected automatic inclusion in any commissions concerning the forest or the county as a whole, especially as it would normally have been in the king's interests to ensure his own influence through that of the leading magnate.¹³⁹ Despite William Beauchamp's appointment, however, the pattern of appointments and the nature of the offences suggest a reluctance by the government to use the Beauchamps, especially Warwick, in this way.

Although the reasons for the dispute in the forest, which had begun by April 1377 and continued until 1395, are obscure, there is enough

¹³⁶ Above, pp. 73–4. ¹³⁷ Above, p. 58.

¹³⁸ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 63; above, pp. 43–4. ¹³⁹ Above, pp. 17–20.

circumstantial evidence for some of the details to be pieced together. It seems that the underlying cause of the trouble was a matter of the respective rights of the king and the bishop of Worcester in the forest. It is noticeable that the dispute started shortly after Henry Wakefield was made bishop in 1375 and finished around the time of his death in April 1395.¹⁴⁰ It seems that Warwick may have been supporting the bishop; perhaps the earl resented the intrusion of direct royal power in the region which was manifested in the continuing interference of Lancaster. Evidence that Warwick may have been colluding with Wakefield can be found in the alleged involvement of one of Wakefield's officers, Robert Mile, in disturbances at Feckenham in 1380. Mile was also a Beauchamp officer of long standing.¹⁴¹ If Warwick was supporting the bishop, this might help to explain why the government was reluctant to use him in commissions concerning Feckenham. In addition, Warwick's poor record of keeping order from 1375 was hardly likely to persuade the government to entrust him with restoring peace in Feckenham. Gaunt preferred to use his power as the nominal head of the regime in the absence of an active king to deal with the problem.

Lancaster's policy can be seen very clearly in the personnel appointed to the commissions. In April 1377, the first general commission of inquiry was issued by the government. Apart from its sweeping powers of inquiry, this commission was notable for its use of men with connections to Gaunt.¹⁴² A year later, a commission of inquiry relating to all trespasses was issued for the entire county, although it may have been aimed principally at the trouble in Feckenham. This time, John Botetourt and the king's esquire John Beauchamp of Holt were appointed, although with them were Richard Ruyhall II and Edmund Brugge, both Worcestershire gentry with connections to Warwick.¹⁴³ In February 1380 the government changed its tactics slightly by giving the commissioners powers of determination. Once more, there was an unusual choice of commissioner in Baldwin Bereford, who was a landowner in Warwickshire and had connections with the court and Lancaster, but had no land in Worcestershire.

¹⁴⁰ The first commission was issued in April 1377, the last in February 1395: *CPR* 1374–7, p. 493; *CPR* 1391–6, p. 588; below, pp. 163–4.

¹⁴¹ *CPR* 1377–81, p. 467; [Appendix 1](#).

¹⁴² *CPR* 1374–7, p. 493. This was to inquire into complaints by the tenants of Feckenham of extortions by Nicholas Wawe, one of the king's officials there. The commissioners were: William Burgh (Gaunt's steward at Leicester: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 288), John Dodyngselles (Gaunt's constable at Kenilworth), John Rous (retained by Gaunt in 1382, but may have had links before this).

¹⁴³ *CPR* 1377–81, p. 252. The full commission was: John Botetourt, Beauchamp of Holt, Edmund Brugge, Thomas Brugge and Richard Ruyhall. Thomas Brugge may also have had links with Warwick at this time: [Appendix 11B](#).

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

The other choices were perhaps more conventional, however, including Henry Ardern and John Catesby. On the same day, the commission was reissued to include the keeper of Feckenham, Sir William Beauchamp, for the first time.¹⁴⁴ Warwick himself was not included until the next commission, which was issued in the aftermath of the Peasants' Revolt in October 1381.¹⁴⁵ Two more commissions of oyer and terminer were ordered by the government in August and November 1382. Warwick appeared on both, but once more there was an 'outsider' in each: Sir Richard Adderbury and John of Gaunt himself.¹⁴⁶

With six commissions in the space of five years, the government was certainly keen to assert royal rights in Feckenham. It is possible, however, that its interference made the situation worse; the fact that successive commissions had to be issued and that the later ones included more of the Beauchamp interest suggests that they were unsuccessful in stamping out the trouble, whilst their sweeping powers may have made them unpopular locally. Direct interference in local politics by the government was even more pronounced in Coventry, where the king was also the overlord of the city as earl of Chester.¹⁴⁷ Just one year after Richard II's accession, the government was forced to issue an inquiry into a riot against the mayor and two of the king's officers, Ralph Hunt and John Shephey. Sureties were also to be taken from representatives of the mysteries (the Coventry guilds) to ensure their good behaviour towards Hunt and Shephey, who claimed that they were unable to prosecute either their own or the king's business in the royal courts for fear of certain people within the city.¹⁴⁸ This incident strongly suggests that direct royal interference in Coventry was resented. The political affiliations of the commissioners can have done little to alleviate the tensions in the town. Apart from the local baron, John Clinton, the other

¹⁴⁴ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 467. The full commission was: William Beauchamp, Henry Ardern, Baldwin Bereford, Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, Robert Tresilian (assize justice), John Rous, John atte Wode (the king's knight). Bereford had been retained by Edward III; his grant of £40 was confirmed in 1378; Gaunt retained him formally in 1382. Bereford held considerable lands around Coventry, including Stoneythorpe, together with Wishaw and Bickmarsh: *CCR 1377–81*, p. 162; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 264; *VCH Warwks.* IV, p. 259; V, pp. 189–90; VI, pp. 127–8.

¹⁴⁵ *CPR 1381–5*, p. 79; the commissioners were: Warwick, Henry Ardern, Baldwin Bereford, William Burgh.

¹⁴⁶ *CPR 1381–5*, pp. 197, 202. The commissioners were: August 1382: Warwick, Richard Adderbury, John Beauchamp of Holt, William Burgh; November 1382: Gaunt, Warwick, William Beauchamp, William Burgh, John Rous. Adderbury's landed interests lay in Oxfordshire and Berkshire. It is not certain which Richard Adderbury was appointed, since both father and son, who shared the same name, were active in the period. Adderbury senior served the Black Prince and had connections to Richard II; Adderbury junior was in the service of Gaunt: S. K. Walker, 'Sir Richard Adderbury (c. 1330–1399) and his Kinsmen: The Rise and Fall of a Gentry Family', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 34 (1990), pp. 118–31.

¹⁴⁷ Above, p. 58.

¹⁴⁸ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 303; *CCR 1377–81*, p. 209.

appointees, the royal esquire John Beauchamp of Holt and the sheriff, Roger Perewych, represented the close identification at this time of the interests of the crown and the duke of Lancaster.¹⁴⁹ Despite the 1378 riot, royal rights continued to be pressed with a series of commissions inquiring into the king's rights to escheated lands (1380) and illegal hunting in Cheylesmore, the king's park at Coventry (1382).¹⁵⁰ Illegal hunting was an occupational hazard for any lord with a private chase. Warwick himself often brought pleas of trespass against people suspected of hunting in his parks.¹⁵¹ But the regime led by Gaunt preferred to use the resources of general commissions, which were both much more sweeping and potentially much more damaging to the delicate balance between centre and locality.

Despite Warwick's problems in maintaining local order and the central government's interventions in local affairs, he could not be completely disregarded or removed by that government, and this was certainly not the aim of Gaunt's policy.¹⁵² In fact, it was to Warwick and his affinity that the government looked for support both during and after the Peasants' Revolt. According to Walsingham, Warwick was one of the lords present in the Tower of London with the king. He was then dispatched to St Albans to deal with the rebels there, but had to return hurriedly when news of risings in the West Midlands reached him. Additionally, the *Anonimale Chronicle* says that Warwick was at Mile End with the king.¹⁵³ In the county-wide commissions issued to arrest and punish the rebels in July 1381, Warwick's name appeared on those for Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. The commissioners chosen for the West Midlands represented a broad sweep of regional political society.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ For Perewych: above, p. 82.

¹⁵⁰ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 516; *CPR 1381–5*, p. 249.

¹⁵¹ For example, TNA CP 40/460, mm. 436d., 579 (illegal hunting at Sutton Coldfield, 1375).

¹⁵² Warwick was still involved in central government himself at this time: above, pp. 81–2.

¹⁵³ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 28; *Anonimale Chronicle*, p. 144. Tradition maintains that John Ball hid at Coventry after the collapse of the revolt: *VCH Warwick*, II, p. 436. There were also rumours of a rising by the tenants of the prior of Worcester: R. B. Dobson (ed.), *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (2nd edn, London, 1983), p. 44. For the social and economic background to the rebellion see C. Dyer, 'The Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381'; A. Harding, 'The Revolt against the Justices'; J. A. Tuck, 'Nobles, Commons and the Great Revolt of 1381', all in R. H. Hilton and M. Aston (eds.), *The English Rising of 1381* (Cambridge, 1984); McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 406–19.

¹⁵⁴ *CPR 1381–5*, p. 70. For Warwickshire the commissioners were: Gaunt, Warwick, John Clinton, John Bermyngeham, Thomas Bermyngeham, William Burgh, Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, Baldwin Freville, William Purfrey, Thomas Ralegh, John Say, William Skipwith, Richard Stafford, John Worth. The Worcestershire commissioners were: Warwick, John Botetourt, Henry Wakefield, bishop of Worcester, John Beauchamp of Holt, Alexander Besford, Henry Bruyn, Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, John Cassy, Walter Cokesey, Roger Corbet, Richard Fyton, John Hambury, John Russell, Richard Ruyhall II, John Sapy, John Say, Richard Tmedbury and John atte Wode.

At this time of deep crisis, Warwick's inclusion was certainly intended to exploit his local power. His appearance in a session as JP with Henry Ardern, also in July 1381, was probably an attempt to buttress royal judicial authority in the county with a display of his power and authority. The fact that the four JPs present on this occasion had also been appointed to the general commissions against the rebels suggests that the members of the commission who were also JPs took on the responsibility for dealing with the unrest themselves. Certainly, at least one case heard before the JPs may have been directly related to rebellion in Warwickshire.¹⁵⁵

The Peasants' Revolt was the first occasion on which Richard II took on an active role as king. The growing need for him to take part in government after a decade of uncertainty at the centre is evident in the parliament of January 1380. The Commons requested that the system of continual councils be ended, and that the king be allowed to rule on his own, as his grandfather had done. This petition was heeded, but as Richard was still only thirteen, he must have remained in some form of tutelage.¹⁵⁶ There is certainly no evidence that he took executive power into his hands at this time. His assumption of power was, rather, a gradual process and may have been hindered by his uncles' reluctance to relinquish their control over government. Even in the aftermath of the Peasants' Revolt, Richard was still not allowed a full role in government; his scope for action must have been curtailed by the appointment of two guardians, Arundel and de la Pole, in the parliament of November 1381.¹⁵⁷ By the autumn of 1382, however, Richard was beginning to assert his own wishes, preferences and policies, for example in his gifts to his personal friends, such as John Beauchamp of Holt.¹⁵⁸

Between 1380 and 1382, therefore, an interim arrangement existed at the centre. It seems that in this the power and influence of Lancaster remained crucial. Indeed, in the West Midlands it seems to have grown. Before 1380, his influence here had been channelled through the commissions that can be associated with his central role in government and through his affinity.¹⁵⁹ In April 1380, he was able to assert his authority even more directly when he was appointed to the Warwickshire peace commission for the first time. Potential central influence through men with central connections was increased with the addition of John Beauchamp of Holt to John Cassy and John atte Wode. This was,

¹⁵⁵ One man was also accused of rioting: *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, p. 120; [Appendix 11A](#).

¹⁵⁶ *RP* III, p. 73; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 44–6.

¹⁵⁷ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 48–50, 55–7.

¹⁵⁸ For example, *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 176, 180, 183, 216 (all grants to Beauchamp of Holt, October–December 1382).

¹⁵⁹ Discussed above, pp. 89–93.

however, also the commission in which Warwick reappeared after his fifteen-month absence, the government having decided that he had been punished enough.¹⁶⁰ Thus Gaunt was aware of the need to give Warwick some sort of local role. Even so, Gaunt soon demonstrated that his appointment to the county bench was no sinecure. In May 1381 he used his Coventry/Kenilworth power base to oversee the Coventry quarter sessions and took the opportunity to preside over a series of indictments against the Burdets of Arrow and the abbot of Alcester. John and Thomas Burdet were accused of receiving and maintaining a gang responsible for three murders in the region around Arrow. Significantly, the jurors said that the murderers came from Cheshire. Perhaps Lancaster was using his powers as JP to deal with problems arising from the earldom of Cheshire while the king was still not capable of acting in person, thus continuing his earlier policy on behalf of the king in Warwickshire.¹⁶¹ The involvement of the Burdets may also be significant. It is uncertain whether Thomas was connected to the Beauchamp affinity by 1381 (his earliest association with Beauchamp men dates from 1385), so Gaunt's attack on him may not have been an intentional criticism of Warwick.¹⁶² But since the alleged felonies took place in the region where Warwick's influence should have been at its strongest, Gaunt's actions implied that he doubted the earl's ability to keep good order.¹⁶³

Lancaster's increasingly direct interest in Warwickshire was also reflected in his retaining patterns. Before 1380, very few men from the county were numbered amongst his retainers, but after this date, he retained several leading figures from the county including John Rous (1382), Warwick's former retainer Sir William Bagot (1382), Sir William Lucy (1381), Sir John Peyto II (1382), Sir Baldwin Mountford (1382) and Sir John Pecche II (1382). Some of this activity may have been the result of Gaunt's plans for a conquest of the Castilian throne, but considering that he had been at the heart of the ruling regime since 1374, it may be argued that he was now deliberately expanding his power base in Warwickshire.¹⁶⁴ His direct intervention in the Burdet case certainly suggests this, as does his payment of an annuity to John Peyto, who may have sought the duke's help in his struggle to wrest the Langley inheritance from John Worth.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ *CPR* 1377–81, pp. 512, 515; above, pp. 89–90.

¹⁶¹ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 102–5; [Appendix II A](#).

¹⁶² In 1385, Burdet was witness to a second settlement of Spernall on William Spernore: WCRO CR 1998/38/CC3; [Appendix I](#).

¹⁶³ For Warwick's lands in western Warwickshire: above, pp. 43–4.

¹⁶⁴ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 33–4.

¹⁶⁵ Above, pp. 74–6; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 110.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

By the early 1380s, therefore, Lancaster's presence in Warwickshire appeared to be increasingly permanent. Whilst Warwick still retained power in the county, he was forced to share it with the duke, who had more of a say in Warwickshire affairs. In Worcestershire, though, Warwick was still the most dominant figure. However, his role in the politics of both the midlands and centre was also changing in the early 1380s. As the king grew up, the earl became less identified with the central government. It is perhaps not surprising that Warwick, a man of forty, should have little in common with a king who was barely in his teens. But the relations between Warwick and Richard II went beyond the simple problem of an age gap and began to assume the proportions of a clash of both personality and policy. As was observed earlier, it seems that Richard may have had novel ideas about the respective roles of the king and nobility and may even have completely misunderstood how the polity functioned. Whatever his attitudes and theories of kingship were, the early evidence from his personal rule suggested that he was not prepared to listen to counsel except from those men whom he considered to be his friends and was intent on ruling as he wished.¹⁶⁶

An indication that Richard did not understand the role and needs of his nobility was apparent in his attitude towards the Mortimer inheritance. The earl of March died in Ireland in December 1381, leaving an underage heir. Over the next few months, grants from the Mortimer inheritance were made piecemeal by the king and his advisers. This was opposed by the chancellor, Richard le Scrope, whose dismissal in the summer of 1382 may have been partly the result of his protest at the king's handling of the Mortimer lands.¹⁶⁷ Since the Mortimer lands in Worcestershire lay in the region furthest away from Warwick's direct influence, in the north and west of the county, Warwick had a direct concern in who would wield power through these estates during a long minority. As a cousin of Mortimer's, he may also have felt that he had rights to the custody.¹⁶⁸ In addition, the piecemeal dispersal of a noble inheritance, even temporarily, was anathema to any magnate with landed property to protect. On this occasion, the pressure put on the king and his advisers by a consortium of nobles, including Warwick and the new earl of Arundel, for the inheritance to be passed intact to their guardianship, was successful.¹⁶⁹ As a result, Warwick's influence

¹⁶⁶ Above, pp. 24–5, 29–31.

¹⁶⁷ *CIPM* 1377–84, pp. 217–28; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 87–90; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 111–12.

¹⁶⁸ Above, pp. 44, 51–2.

¹⁶⁹ *CFR* 1383–9, p. 22; Holmes, *Estates of the Higher Nobility*, pp. 10–19; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 42–5. A. Dunn, 'Richard II and the Mortimer Inheritance', in C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England II* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 159–61.

in northern and western Worcestershire for the next decade increased considerably.

This early clash with the king was the first of several instances in which Warwick and his affinity found themselves the target of royal anger. Ironically, considering their deteriorating relationship in the 1380s, Richard and Gaunt seem to have shared similar ideas about upholding royal rights.¹⁷⁰ Richard, however, was even more tactless than his uncle in the manner in which he tried to enforce his prerogative. The way in which the young king went about asserting his rights also suggests that he would brook no opposition. Perhaps he was already attempting to assert his authority in an attempt to shake off his uncles' tutelage. Warwick and his affinity bore much of the brunt of this. As early as January 1382, Henry Ardern was summoned to appear before the king's council with Margaret, the granddaughter and heiress of his kinsman Giles Ardern of Drayton (Oxfordshire). It seems that after Giles' death, Warwick had used his influence to help Henry Ardern to acquire the wardship of the heiress and custody of Drayton, of which the earl was overlord. The Beauchamp interest in and control over the Ardern inheritance was further increased by the marriage of Warwick's esquire Walter Power to Giles' widow. In 1381, however, this arrangement came to the ears of the government. An inquiry was issued into Giles' lands and heir, resulting in Ardern's summons before the council. The phrasing of the summons is unusual and suggests that Richard was directly involved, since he was reported to be angered by the fact that Ardern had ignored a previous summons to appear.¹⁷¹ Warwick himself also incurred the king's wrath later that same year, when he was ordered not to interfere with the manor of Bishopston in Gower and to give it to the chapter of Llandaff, to whom the king judged it belonged. Again the king was reported to be angry at Warwick's flouting of royal authority.¹⁷² Already, the warning signs were beginning to appear, with Richard showing himself to be intolerant of anyone who appeared to deny him his full prerogative. Nevertheless, after a decade without an active king, Richard's subjects must have welcomed the evidence that he was beginning to assume the mantle of governance.

To sum up, the nature and course of politics in the period 1369–82 were therefore characterised by the lack of an active king and the uncertainties of Edward III's old age, exacerbated by a lack of available or experienced leaders. Much of the responsibility for governance fell heavily on the shoulders of Lancaster from 1374. He proved to be conscientious in

¹⁷⁰ For the deterioration of their relationship, see Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 87–101.

¹⁷¹ *CCR* 1381–5, p. 36; *CIPM* 1377–84, pp. 188–90.

¹⁷² *CCR* 1381–5, p. 163.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

upholding the power and status of the crown, but his personal abilities as a leader were somewhat lacking. The combination of erratic leadership and the resumption of a war that was no longer going well and a heavy burden of taxation created the crisis of 1376. In the West Midlands, the vacuum created by the absence of many of the leading magnates was filled to some extent by Gaunt, particularly in Warwickshire. On Warwick's return, the combination of his inexperience and desire to reassert his power in Warwickshire led to a spate of violent incidents. But, without the king to act as the ultimate arbiter, the government's (and therefore Gaunt's) solution was to intrude still further into the region, using both the private influence drawn from his landed power and his public influence from his position as the leader of the regime in the absence of an active king. All this led to a difficult relationship between Warwick and Gaunt, as the two were increasingly forced to share power, with Warwick having to allow Gaunt the more senior role. But in 1382, despite the signs of growing involvement by the young king, it still remained to be seen what Richard's attitude towards governance would be, how he would react to the power of his uncles and how this, in turn, would affect the local balance of power.

Chapter 3

1383–1389

Despite, and indeed because of, the growing role of Richard II as an active king, the period 1383–9 was one of increasing political tension which culminated in the prolonged and serious crisis of 1386–8. There seem to have been several competing influences operating at the centre, including the king and his friends, who were pitted against Gaunt and Gloucester. The reason for these fluctuating patterns was partly the result of the king's youth and the problems this caused within the political power structures both centrally and locally. Born in early 1367, Richard was rapidly reaching an age when he could be expected and might expect to rule for himself, although he was still a teenager or very young man for most of the period.¹ By late 1382, however, the king was beginning to show signs of asserting his own authority. Grants made by Richard from late 1382 to his friends, for example Simon Burley, Robert de Vere and Warwick's kinsman, John Beauchamp of Holt, in key strategic locations such as Wales and the south coast demonstrate that he was starting to rule for himself in a manner which led to open criticism.² The parliamentary Commons were concerned enough in October 1383 to complain that

¹ Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 108–11. For similar problems under Henry VI: Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 120–2.

² Examples of Richard's policy include: Burley: Justice of South Wales for life, 1382, constable of Dover Castle and warden of the Cinque Ports, 1384; de Vere: Queenborough Castle, 1385; Beauchamp of Holt: life custody of Conway castle, 1382; Justice of North Wales for life, 1385; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 62, 73–80; *CPR 1381–5*, pp. 183, 197. The purpose and nature of Richard's strategy in these regions, like his policy towards the localities in general, has yet to receive much consideration, but see R. R. Davies, 'Richard II and the Principality of Chester, 1397–99', in du Boulay and Barron (eds.), *Reign of Richard II*, pp. 256–60; J. Allen, 'Richard II and the Localities, c. 1382–86' (unpublished BA dissertation, Cambridge, 1996), who argues that Richard was following a consistent policy of building up a secure base for himself and his associates whilst exerting pressure on his uncles and Arundel, by whom he felt threatened, through grants in their spheres of influence. Allen emphasises the key strategic importance of the Marches and the south-east. This topic has been explored in more length in M. King, 'Richard II, Shropshire and the Northern March, c. 1383–97' (unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Cambridge, 2010).

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

the king was listening to unsound advice and to ask that he should take personal responsibility for government.³

Meanwhile, the king and his new friends' apparent lack of interest in continuing the war may also have given his uncles cause for concern, especially since Richard's advisers appeared to have believed that the best form of defence was to appease France, a policy which had disastrous consequences in the expansion of the French into Flanders and the threat of invasion in 1385/6. Criticism of the king was exacerbated by concerns over his increasingly extravagant grants to his friends and mounting debts.⁴ The king was also starting to reveal some unattractive qualities, notably a bad temper. The chronicles from this period report Richard's erratic temper and intemperate attitude towards any criticism levelled at his rule. Although Fletcher has argued recently that Richard actually espoused a more warlike foreign policy but was hampered in achieving this by parliament, and it is indeed likely that some of these accounts may be exaggerated, they are too consistent to be entirely fictitious, and Warwick's dealings with the king in 1381–2 and 1385 certainly suggest that Richard was ruling in a way that alienated previously loyal members of the nobility.⁵

By 1384–5, relations between the king and his uncles had deteriorated to the extent that accusations of treason were levelled against Gaunt, and when the opportunity came for the duke to renew his claim to the throne of Castile in August 1385 it was probably greeted with considerable relief by both Lancaster and the king.⁶ Significantly for the politics of the West Midlands, Lancaster departed for Castile in July 1386, and did not return

³ *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 55; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 91.

⁴ The chroniclers depict the panic in the south-east caused by the invasion scare: Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 145–8; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 97–8; *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 349–51; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 89–91, 94–5, 104–6; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 135–47, 152–8 (who questions Palmer's argument that it was de la Pole who was entirely responsible for the whole policy); McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 429–34, 438–9, 442–3; Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, pp. 44–84; J. S. Roskell, *The Impeachment of Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk* (Manchester, 1984), pp. 31–48; J. Sherborne, 'The Defence of the Realm and the Impeachment of Michael de la Pole in 1386', in J. Taylor and W. R. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 97–116. The French invasion of 1385 was only averted by the capture of Damme by the rebel Ghentois, whom the English government neglected to aid, preferring to send its army to Scotland. In 1386, Charles VI became ill at a vital moment, thus delaying French plans; there were also problems with money. For criticisms of Richard's spending, see Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 103–6, 114–18, 124–6, 132–4.

⁵ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 112–13, 126, 132, 150–2; *Chronicon Angliae*, pp. 359, 364; *Polychronicon* IX, pp. 33–4, 55–7, 60–1; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 80–1, 85–6, 88–90; Fletcher, *Richard II*, pp. 103–4, 143–50. Warwick and his affinity had already borne the brunt of the king's temper in 1381–2: above, pp. 96–7. For Warwick's experiences in 1385, below, pp. 119–21.

⁶ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 112–13, 129–32; *Polychronicon* IX, pp. 33–4, 56–7, 62–3; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 80–2, 85–6, 88–9; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 438–40; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 92–8; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 131–4, 143–5.

until November 1389.⁷ His immense wealth and landed power had always been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, his dominant position meant that he was an inevitable target for those who wished to gain influence with the king, while the duke's character and actions did little to alleviate his unpopularity. On the other hand, Gaunt's dominating presence and determination to uphold the power of the crown also acted as a deterrent to opponents of the king, and as a restraint on the king himself. Once he had left the political stage, there was nothing to prevent either the king or his opponents from acting as they wished, which led directly to the constitutional crisis of 1386–8.⁸ Meanwhile, by November 1387, Warwick had become involved in the opposition to the king when he appeared in arms at Harringay.⁹ Since he was not particularly prominent in central politics in the 1380s and had taken no part in the parliamentary protests of 1386 against the king and his friends, his involvement appears rather surprising. What had driven him to these desperate measures and what did he aim to achieve by rebelling? When did he decide actively to oppose Richard and to what extent were Richard's domestic policies to blame?

A promising method of interpreting the 1380s was suggested by Tuck, who cited the king's 'system of patronage' as a major contributing factor to the crisis of 1386–8. As we have seen, however, Tuck's argument was based on the Namierite notion of a 'chain' of patronage. Tuck argued that in the 1380s Richard attempted to increase the power of his friends Simon Burley, Robert de Vere and John Beauchamp of Holt through grants of office and lands. This resulted in alterations in the traditional balance of power in the localities which threatened the influence and interest of established magnates in the region because they were denied access to royal patronage and were thus unable to benefit their followers, who were therefore liable to desert them. Especially relevant to this study is Tuck's suggestion that the accumulation of power in the hands of Beauchamp of Holt in Worcestershire through his greater access to the king's favour challenged Warwick's traditional dominance in the county. It has already been shown that Tuck's chain of patronage idea can no longer be sustained on the grounds that it was land which conferred local power on the nobility, not their ability to channel royal grants to their gentry followers.¹⁰ Nevertheless, if Tuck's suggestion that Richard

⁷ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 440–42; Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, pp. 81–4; Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, pp. 104–7, 118–33; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 148–51.

⁸ McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings*, p. 27; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, p. 446; Bennett, *Revolution of 1399*, p. 30; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 151–2.

⁹ Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 12–14; below, pp. 123–31.

¹⁰ Tuck, 'Richard II's System of Patronage', pp. 1–4, 15–18; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 62, 71–5, 87–91, 99–100. The problems with patronage are discussed above, pp. 13–16.

was trying to create power in the hands of his friends like Beauchamp of Holt is viewed in terms of the geo-politics of the region, an explanation for Warwick's rebellion may be found. Was Richard attempting to build up alternative sources of landed power in the region, a policy directly threatening to Warwick's influence? The answer to this question can be found partly in the records relating to Warwick and his affinity, which become particularly full from 1382. This is thanks mainly to John Catesby's account of the Ladbroke dispute, which provides an exceptional source for understanding the behind-the-scenes dealings in a land dispute and the operation of lordship through public and private processes. Although such a record must be approached with caution, since it is a one-sided view and it is not clear how typical Catesby's experience was, it provides invaluable information about Warwick's practice of lordship and on the membership and activities of his affinity.¹¹ When the details of the Ladbroke dispute are added to the evidence provided by the Beauchamp Cartulary and other records from the region, it becomes possible to provide some answers to the puzzling question of why and how Warwick became a rebel.

From the end of 1382, as Richard's personal interest in government began to increase, so Warwick's role in affairs at the centre began to wane. These trends appear to be rooted in a mutual antipathy. Warwick's previous record as a war captain and his support for the Commons' complaints in 1376 may have led him to be sympathetic to the growing fears about the conduct of foreign policy and especially Richard's desire for peace. At the same time, Richard's attitude towards his domestic rule led to growing mutual suspicion at home. Tensions between the two had already become apparent in 1382 in their confrontation over the manor of Bishopston in Gower.¹² In 1383, Richard and the earl were again in disagreement, this time over a dispute in the heartland of Warwick's estates in southern Worcestershire. The abbot of Westminster had appealed to Richard as patron of the abbey, claiming that Warwick's officers were preventing him from exercising his rights of free warren in two of his Worcestershire manors. Richard intervened to ensure that this dispute was settled to the abbey's advantage. Saul interprets this conflict as the result of over-aggressive rule by the earl, against which the abbot was forced to defend himself. This, however, appears to be a rather one-sided view of events. Warwick did have a history of poor dispute management, as the previous chapter shows, but, because only the abbot's version of events has survived, it cannot be assumed that the earl was entirely the aggressor and the abbot entirely the victim. As we have seen, ecclesiastical lords

¹¹ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute'. ¹² Above, p. 97.

were just as keen to assert their landed rights as their lay counterparts, and it may be possible that the dispute sprang from both sides' intransigence.¹³ However, the real significance of this case lies in Richard's support of the abbot against Warwick, and his interference in local affairs to Warwick's disadvantage. On its own, this incident was not enough to alienate Warwick, but it was not the first occasion, nor the last, on which Richard's rule would undermine the earl's interests.

If we are to explore what happened between Richard and Warwick in this period in the light of Tuck's focus on patronage, albeit with the emphasis on the geo-political implications, it is essential to examine the apparently meteoric rise of John Beauchamp of Holt, a member of a cadet branch of the Beauchamp family and a kinsman of the earl, and its impact on local politics is essential. An immediate problem with Tuck's interpretation is his assumption that Beauchamp's status before 1382 was relatively humble compared to that of Warwick.¹⁴ In fact, Beauchamp had been in the royal service since the 1360s and, although he was called a king's esquire until 1385, he had already acquired considerable landed status several years before his 'promotion', as a result of his marriage to the heiress of Robert FitzWyth. This marriage, which had taken place by 1370, brought him three manors in Warwickshire and three in Oxfordshire.¹⁵ With the acquisition of the FitzWyth inheritance, added to his patrimony in Worcestershire, he was well able to support the knighthood conferred upon him in 1385. In fact, the king's grant to Beauchamp of 100 marks per annum in order to maintain his new estates is misleading and was not strictly necessary, though it is indicative of the king's increasing extravagance.¹⁶ Admittedly, the method of Beauchamp's promotion to the barony of Kidderminster in 1387 was unique, but, in the wider context of promotions to the late medieval peerage, it was not unusual for scions of cadet branches to achieve such honours, or for the king to promote his

¹³ Saul, 'Richard II and Westminster Abbey', pp. 212–16. For the role of ecclesiastical lords in local politics: above, pp. 47–50.

¹⁴ Above, pp. 8–9. Tuck says that Beauchamp had 'a small inheritance in the West Midlands': *Richard II*, p. 84. Beauchamp of Holt was the descendant of a thirteenth-century cadet line, via a younger son of William Beauchamp: *VCH Wores.* III, pp. 403–4.

¹⁵ Joan FitzWyth was of age in 1375, when she and her husband were granted livery of her inheritance. The Warwickshire manors were: Bubbenhall, Shotswell and Barnacle: *CAD* IV, p. 407; *CCR* 1374–7, p. 157; *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 66. It should also be noted that Beauchamp had been well rewarded by Edward III: in 1375 he was granted £20 per annum for life: *CPR* 1374–7, p. 163. Ross comments that in 1388, Beauchamp was one of Richard's wealthiest chamber knights, thanks mainly to his landed inheritance: C. D. Ross, 'Forfeitures for Treason in the Reign of Richard II', *EHR*, 71 (1956), pp. 563–4.

¹⁶ For Beauchamp's lands in Worcestershire: above, pp. 58–9. *CPR* 1385–9, p. 16. A month later, Beauchamp surrendered this grant in exchange for an even more generous one of £100 per annum from Caernarvon: *CPR* 1385–9, p. 25 p. 99.

own friends to the nobility. Edward III had done exactly the same thing, although in much less controversial circumstances. In terms of his landed status and service to the crown, Beauchamp was not unworthy of the king's favour.¹⁷ But did his growing closeness to the king create a rival power and source of lordship to Warwick in the West Midlands?

John Beauchamp's status in West Midlands society, coupled with his role as an esquire of the king's chamber, meant that he received regular appointments to local office throughout the 1370s, especially to commissions investigating royal rights.¹⁸ On the other hand, his commitments at court also meant that he was not resident in the county as frequently as other members of the gentry, many of whom were retained by Warwick. This was reflected in his apparent lack of participation in the activities of the Worcestershire JPs despite his regular appointments to the county bench. It could be argued that this reflects the scarcity of the judicial records for the JPs rather than the real extent of his role.¹⁹ But when surviving deeds from the period are examined, they produce very similar results. Even in his native Worcestershire, Beauchamp's name appears very rarely as either a feoffee or a witness. On the few occasions when he does appear, his closest associates were John Cassy, the royal justice, Sir John atte Wode, the king's knight, Sir Richard Thurgrym, the bishop of Worcester's steward, Alexander Besford, a lawyer with connections to Warwick, and Richard de la Felde, the parson of St Michael on Cornhill, London.²⁰ Thus, Beauchamp's associates were drawn almost solely from his court connections, some of whom did indeed have some local standing, but he was not a particularly active participant in the wider socio-political life of the region.

This is not to suggest that Beauchamp was an isolated figure, or that his relations with his neighbours were bad. In particular, there is nothing to indicate that before 1387 Beauchamp and Warwick were rivals locally. On the contrary, their relations seem to have been entirely amicable. For example, in 1385 Warwick granted his kinsman a life interest in fisheries

¹⁷ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 84–5; Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, pp. 47–8, 58. As Saul comments: 'In another reign and at another time, he [Beauchamp] might well have been received as a not unworthy recruit to the peerage': Saul, *Richard II*, p. 124. For an account of similar but uncontroversial promotions under Edward III see Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage*, pp. 18–27.

¹⁸ For example: he was commissioner of the peace by 1368; in 1374 he was a commissioner of inquiry into wastes by Percival Walsh at Astley; in 1378 he was on commissions of inquiry into trespasses in Worcestershire and concerning riots at Coventry: *CPR 1367–70*, p. 192; *CPR 1377–81*, pp. 252, 303.

¹⁹ Above, pp. 71–3; [Appendix IIIb](#).

²⁰ For Cassy: below, p. 112. See, for example, Beauchamp's settlement of land (1375). His feoffees were: atte Wode, Thurgrym and Cassy. Besford was also associated with him at this time: *CAD IV*, p. 459. See also his settlement of the FitzWyth inheritance (1375): *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 66. Atte Wode was also a kinsman: *CIPM 1384–92*, p. 444.

in his manor of Shrawley.²¹ This was hardly the act of a man jealous or fearful of Beauchamp's status and influence. Similarly, John Beauchamp's kinship with John Catesby, who was increasingly linked to the earl, may have served as a connection with the Warwick affinity.²² It seems that, despite his lack of involvement in local affairs, John Beauchamp was held in considerable regard by local society in the 1370s, probably because of his useful links with the royal household; for example, he served as MP for the county four times between 1377 and 1380.²³ However, from 1383, Beauchamp became less active in the region, despite the royal grants of land made to him there. These grants included the custody of the inheritance of Talbot of Richard's Castle (in north Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire) and of the priory of Astley (north-west Worcestershire) free of farm.²⁴ Also in 1384, Beauchamp began the acquisition of one third of the manor of Kidderminster, together with the reversion of another third.²⁵ Whether Richard already intended to endow Beauchamp with the barony of Kidderminster is unknown; it may be that the idea for Beauchamp's title only occurred later when Richard had become isolated.

It must be said that, in comparison to Warwick's dominance in Worcestershire, Beauchamp's acquisitions in the county were unlikely to upset the balance of power. The Talbot custody did not bring him vast new estates, particularly when compared to Warwick's acquisition of the custody of the Mortimer estates in 1383.²⁶ Nor is there any evidence that Beauchamp was a rival focus of lordship to Warwick; he does not appear to have had a local following, and, as we have seen, his connections were generally court- rather than locally centred.²⁷ In fact, Richard seems to have been more concerned to appoint Beauchamp to offices with defensive significance such as life justiciar of north Wales than to establish him

²¹ BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 166v.

²² Catesby was uncle to Beauchamp's wife, Joan: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 301; *VCH Warwks.* v, pp. 148–9.

²³ *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 196–8, 205, 207.

²⁴ *CFR* 1383–91, p. 41; *CPR* 1385–9, p. 467. The Talbot inheritance in Worcestershire included: Wychbold, Edvin Loach, Shelsley Walsh and Stanford on Teme: *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 59–60; IV, pp. 273, 335, 342.

²⁵ *CPR* 1381–5, p. 460; *CCR* 1385–9, p. 107; *CIMisc* 1388–93, pp. 108–15. This appears to have been a purchase by Beauchamp, not, as Tuck assumes, a grant by the king. In the 1380s, Beauchamp was having trouble with his purchase since he petitioned parliament that he had bought the manor in good faith, only to discover that there was a previous entail on it: TNA SC 8/94/4686; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 74. Harriss has suggested that Warwick was angered by the grant of the barony of Kidderminster to Beauchamp and secured the manor after his fall; Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, p. 454.

²⁶ Above, pp. 96–7.

²⁷ This is in direct comparison to the more local power bases of William Bagot and John Russell in the 1390s: below, pp. 157–9, 162–3, 167–72, 177–82.

as a rival power to Warwick in the West Midlands. This may explain the grant to Beauchamp of the Talbot inheritance and of Astley Priory, both of which were in the region of north-western Worcestershire, an area closely associated with Marcher politics. Similarly, Beauchamp had been appointed constable of Bridgnorth (Shropshire) in Edward III's reign and the addition of Kidderminster (which had a direct connection by road to Bridgnorth) to Beauchamp's holdings may have been part of an attempt by Richard to create a nexus of power across the Worcestershire–Shropshire border, enhancing Beauchamp's standing as a Marcher lord.²⁸ It may be that further study of the region of Wales and the Marches will reveal more than events in the West Midlands about the true nature of Richard's policy in the early 1380s. In the case of the earl of Warwick, it can be concluded that Beauchamp was neither a direct threat to the earl's dominance in Worcestershire nor the main impetus behind his actions in 1387–8. Warwick and Beauchamp appear to have become enemies in 1387–8 not because of a long-term rivalry, but because the king's actions forced them to choose sides. However, if Tuck's argument that the king's grants to his friend was causing disruption locally cannot be used to explicate the politics of the West Midlands in the 1380s, the fact remains that Warwick did rebel in 1387. Tuck's ideas on Richard's use of patronage, if reinterpreted in geo-political terms, are very suggestive in stimulating further thought about Richard's ideas on kingship. They lead to the question of whether Richard and his advisers may have been attempting to implement a novel method of rule in which royal power was enforced in an increasingly authoritarian fashion. In the 1390s, and perhaps also in some parts of England in the 1380s, one manifestation of this was direct interference by the king in the localities, to destabilise certain members of the nobility.²⁹ It certainly seems that it was Richard's aggression which alienated Warwick, but it was not until the approach of the crisis that this tension manifested itself in local terms.

Although current interpretations of his reign tend to veer away from addressing the idea that Richard had a consistent policy towards governance, there is evidence in both his attitudes and his actions to link his policies of the 1380s to those of the 1390s. In particular there are consistencies in three interrelated areas of Richard's rule: his apparent distrust of some members of his nobility, his cavalier attitude towards the common law, customs and unspoken assumptions which protected his subjects' lives and property and his determination to use his landed

²⁸ *VCH Wörcs.* III, pp. 160–1; for other grants to Beauchamp: Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 74; above, pp. 99, 105. These issues are currently being explored by Mark King; my thanks to him for discussing his ideas with me.

²⁹ Discussed below, pp. 122–3, 149–60.

inheritance in Cheshire and Wales to create a power base for himself. That Richard either did not comprehend or was prepared to flout the customs surrounding landed inheritance had already become apparent in his treatment of the Mortimer inheritance in 1382.³⁰ Similarly, he was also prepared to contravene the terms of his grandfather's will in an alarming display of insouciance regarding the usually binding nature of enfeoffments to uses. By challenging Edward III's will, Richard was undermining all landlords' rights to expect that their property would be protected by enfeoffments.³¹ In his actions, Richard was coming very close to overstepping the dividing line between what was acceptable behaviour by the king and what would alienate his subjects.³² Worse was to come in his Questions to the Judges in 1387 when he tampered with the law in attempting to widen the definition of treason with its huge implication for lives and property.³³ Richard's attitude towards his subjects' property and lives was made more sinister by his apparent attempts to use the crown lands in Cheshire and Wales to build up a power base for himself and his friends, even in the 1380s, as if he were fearful of the rest of his subjects.³⁴ Taken together, these general observations suggest that Richard may have had novel ideas about the respective roles of the king and the nobility. Perhaps his uneasy relationship with his uncles made him suspicious of any magnate who appeared to support them or criticise him.³⁵

How did these attitudes affect the West Midlands? Richard's personal rule in the 1380s can be divided into two periods. The first, from late 1382 to July 1386, marked his gradual assumption of executive power. Until mid 1384, Gaunt still had considerable influence over central government. After this date, his worsening relations with the king were reflected in the exclusion of members of the Lancastrian affinity from office in Warwickshire. Nevertheless, until Gaunt's departure for Castile in July 1386, his presence still prevented Richard from ruling entirely as he pleased. Richard's actions at the Wonderful Parliament in October 1386 represent one of the earliest opportunities when he was able to exercise his untrammelled power and it is from this date that Warwick, with the rest of the country, felt the full impact of Richard's rule.

³⁰ Above, pp. 96–7.

³¹ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 75–6; C. Given-Wilson, 'Richard II and his Grandfather's Will', *EHR*, 93 (1978), pp. 320–1, 327–30, 332–5. This trend was begun by Burley when Richard was still too young to direct policy, but was then continued by Richard once he was old enough.

³² Above, pp. 24–6.

³³ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 116–17; below, pp. 125–30.

³⁴ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 82–3; Davies, 'Richard II and the Principality of Chester', pp. 256–79.

³⁵ For a discussion of Richard's attitudes towards kingship: above, pp. 24–5, 29–31.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

In the West Midlands, this pattern of a power struggle, followed by Richard's attempt to rule by himself, is evident first of all in the structure of office-holding in the West Midlands. Tuck has suggested that, as early as 1383, Richard attempted to influence local politics through the appointment of sheriffs favourable to him in some counties, for example Rutland and Wiltshire.³⁶ In Warwickshire, however, there is no sign of this policy until 1385. This may have been the result of Warwick's and Gaunt's dominance of the county, which made it harder for the king to insert a candidate whom he favoured.³⁷ In the early 1380s, Gaunt's continuing influence over local appointments in Warwickshire is evident in the choice of William Bagot as sheriff of Warwickshire in 1382. Bagot, who was now formally retained by the duke, held the position for two years.³⁸ Although Tuck has pointed out that in 1383 the king appears to have appointed the sheriff of Warwickshire by signet seal, the choice of Bagot makes it seem more likely that it was Gaunt's influence at the centre which steered the government towards this choice. Unfortunately for Gaunt, he was no more successful in controlling Bagot's activities than Warwick had been. Bagot used his position to prosecute his feuds, and, if later indictments against him can be believed, he was also guilty of an impressive array of malpractices and felonies.³⁹ The combination of Bagot's activities as sheriff with the increasingly poor relations between the king and Gaunt worked initially to Warwick's advantage. In 1384, Bagot was replaced by a Beauchamp man, John Bermyngeham. In 1385, however, Bermyngeham's replacement was John Calveley, who was from Leicestershire but also had landed interests in Cheshire. This may be significant, considering the growth of the king's power centred on his earldom of Chester.⁴⁰ Calveley's appointment may indicate Richard's growing determination and ability to control local politics, even in regions dominated by powerful magnates, through appointments

³⁶ De Vere was appointed sheriff of Rutland for life in 1385; in 1383, de Vere's chamberlain, Sir John Lancaster, was appointed sheriff of Wiltshire for life, only to be replaced in 1385 by the chamber knight Sir John Salisbury. Mitchell has argued that these appointments were an attempt to build up royal power in areas where magnate influence was weak as a response to the Peasants' Revolt. Whatever the reason, these appointments were very unusual, and have not yet received analysis from a local perspective which might reveal more about the king's motives: Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 60–1; Mitchell, 'Knightly Household of Richard II', pp. 112–18, 125–30, 209–10.

³⁷ Worcestershire, of course, was free from any royal intervention through the shrievalty because the office remained firmly in the hands of Warwick and his deputies; above, pp. 25–6.

³⁸ *L&I* 9, p. 145. Gaunt retained Bagot in 1382: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 263; above, pp. 87–9. The appointment of sheriffs and escheators for more than the legal one-year terms clearly concerned the Commons in the 1380s. There were petitions that the statute against such appointments be enforced in 1383 and 1384: *RP* III, pp. 159, 173.

³⁹ Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 100; below, pp. 182–3.

⁴⁰ Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 284; above, pp. 104–7.

to the key office of sheriff. As we shall see, it also reflected Richard's deteriorating relations with Warwick at this time.⁴¹

Lancaster also continued to influence the government's policy towards law and order in the localities until 1384. The continuing employment of centralised commissions, coupled with the use of King's Bench as a superior eyre, had formed an integral part of Gaunt's rule from 1374.⁴² It is noteworthy that, although Richard is often associated with this kind of intrusive policy, initially he seems to have rejected it as an unwanted imposition by his hated uncle. This pattern, and the struggle for power between Richard and his uncles, is reflected in the rate of issue of commissions. In 1383 and 1384, commissions of oyer and terminer were issued in the continuing dispute between the bishop of Worcester and the crown in Feckenham Forest. After this, no more were issued until 1391.⁴³ This gap might be explained as the result of a lull in the dispute if it were not for a very similar pattern in the issue of commissions concerning royal rights in Coventry. In 1383–4, four such commissions were issued, three of them between July and September 1384. After this, they lapsed until 1389.⁴⁴ These gaps are too consistent to be purely accidental. It is certainly possible that they were caused by the growing crisis in the defence of England, followed by the political crisis of 1386–8.⁴⁵ However, it is noticeable that the last commissions were issued in 1384, the year when Richard's reaction against Lancaster became noticeable, whilst the last excursion of King's Bench into the localities took place in 1384.⁴⁶

If Richard did reject Gaunt's policies, however, this does not fully explain the actual appointments to the commissions in 1383–4. Although Lancastrian retainers disappeared almost entirely from the Coventry commissions, it was Warwick rather than the king who profited, since his own men were nominated in their place, for example Nicholas

⁴¹ *L&I* 9, p. 145; Calveley was retained for life by the king in 1394; this appointment suggests that there may have been a link before this date: Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 284.

⁴² Above, pp. 70–4.

⁴³ *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 262, 426.

⁴⁴ *CPR* 1381–5, p. 350 (illegal hunting at Cheylesmore, August 1383), p. 497 (conspiracy by the Guild of the Nativity, July 1384), p. 504 (trespasses of vert and venison at Cheylesmore, escheated property, September 1384).

⁴⁵ Above, pp. 99–101.

⁴⁶ Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, p. 204. As in the period 1368–74, it is possible tentatively to place these trends in the West Midlands in a wider national framework through counting the total number of commissions of oyer and terminer issued. The numbers are as follows: twenty-four in 1383, twenty-one in the period January to July 1384, but only twelve for August to December 1384. In 1385, just twelve commissions were issued in the entire year: *CPR* 1381–5, *CPR* 1385–9. This evidence strongly suggests a sudden change in emphasis after July 1384, which fits perfectly with the evidence from the West Midlands.

Lyllyng.⁴⁷ This follows the pattern seen in appointments to the shrievalty, and may have been linked both to feuds against John Ray and John Catesby in the Coventry locale involving Bagot and to Richard's early attempts to flex his muscles against Gaunt.⁴⁸ The shifting nature of power at the centre in this period is made clear by the appointments to the commission of May 1384 concerning Feckenham. Gaunt had been named regularly on these commissions since 1382, but now he was joined by his brother Gloucester. Warwick and his brother were omitted, perhaps because of their continued support for the bishop, combined with the tensions between Gaunt and the earl in Warwickshire.⁴⁹ This commission, however, represented the last of its kind until the 1390s, and it was perhaps part of a last-ditch attempt by Lancaster to preserve his influence over government.

If the evidence from appointments to the shrievalty and judicial commissions demonstrates the struggle for power between Richard and his uncles from which the king eventually emerged the victor, was this reflected in the role of the JPs in the period? Here we have the difficulty of no longer being sure of the precise role of the commission at this time.⁵⁰ Mitchell has argued that the king, advised by Simon Burley, responded to the crisis of the Peasants' Revolt by placing household knights on the special commissions issued in 1382 to deal with the rebels. These knights were often appointed to the quorum. Furthermore, she argues, although the general peace commissions lost their powers of determination in 1382, the special commissioners kept theirs, and were thus a useful means of social control.⁵¹ Post, by contrast, has followed the Putnam paradigm in assuming that the development of the JPs was already complete. He explains the Appellants' apparent negligence in issuing new peace commissions in 1387–8 by arguing that they did not perceive the presence of household men on the special commissions to be a threat. He has argued

⁴⁷ The commissioners were: 3 August 1383: the chamber knight Baldwin Bereford and John Catesby; 14 July 1384: William Burgh (assize justice; had been Gaunt's steward at Leicester, 1377–8: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 288), Robert Burgulon (Warwick's man), Catesby, John Marton, William Skipwith (assize justice), John Styward; 18 September 1384: Burgulon, Casteby, Marton, Styward, John Ray; 20 September 1384: Burgulon, Casteby, Marton; 30 September 1384: William Bagot, Burgulon, Catesby. The appointment of Lyllyng was unusual: he was one of Warwick's key retainers, yet had no land in the West Midlands apart from that granted to him for life by the earl. His appointment does suggest that Warwick was still not completely out of favour at this time: Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 143, 149–50; *HP* III, pp. 603–5.

⁴⁸ For the Bagot-Ray and Bagot-Catesby disputes, below, pp. 115–18.

⁴⁹ *CPR* 1381–5, p. 426. The commissioners were: Gaunt, Woodstock, Richard Adderbury, John Beauchamp of Holt, Robert Cherlton (assize justice), Robert Dyngley (connected to Thomas Holland, who nominated him to hold court at Feckenham concerning the Bishop of Worcester's liberties, 1392–3: TNA C 260/105 (22)), John Rous (retained by Gaunt), Richard Ruyhall.

⁵⁰ Above, pp. 93–4.

⁵¹ Mitchell, 'Richard II's Knightly Household', pp. 136–69.

that the apparent withdrawal of the determining powers in 1382 was a clerical error which many JPs ignored.⁵² However, the evidence from the West Midlands in the 1370s has already shown that this was not entirely the case, in that the county benches were not yet fully politicised, whilst experimentation with the powers and personnel of the bench continued. We have seen, however, that the office of JP was occasionally used by the nobility as a useful means of asserting their authority in the region.⁵³ How then should the attitude of both the king and the Appellants towards the role of the JPs in the 1380s be interpreted? This question can best be answered by considering the identity of the active JPs in the period to 1389 and also the type of case appearing before them. The results can then be compared with the evidence from the period 1369–82.

There are several general comments that can be made about the West Midlands peace commissions between 1382 and 1389. First of all, there is no surviving evidence that the special commissions whose membership has been analysed by Mitchell were ever active in the region, whereas there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the usual JPs continued to play a part in the judicial system. This argument will therefore concentrate solely on the work of the JPs. Second, after the issue of new peace commissions for the West Midlands in December 1382, the government does not appear to have been interested in making further changes to them. This is in direct contrast to the period between 1374 and 1381, when there had been a series of changes, the most significant of which had been the exclusion of Warwick himself in 1379–80.⁵⁴ In Warwickshire, despite the departure of Gaunt in 1386, no alterations were made to the bench except for the association of Warwick's retainer Nicholas Lyllyng in February 1386. After this, the commissioners remained unchanged until 1389.⁵⁵ In Worcestershire, a similar policy prevailed. One new commission was issued, also in 1386, which also took cognisance of the arrival in the region of Lyllyng. Despite the death of John Botetourt in April 1386, no action was taken to replace him until 1389.⁵⁶ It seems that the government was willing to let the membership of the West Midlands county benches stagnate. This may suggest that who was actually in a position to act as JP was not as important as it had been before 1382 and that this was because, contrary to Post's argument, the JPs had indeed lost their determining powers. Finally, it should be remembered that the JPs were operating within the wider judicial system, to which they were

⁵² J. B. Post, 'The Peace Commissions of 1382', *EHR*, 91 (1976), 98–101.

⁵³ Above, pp. 79–80, 94. ⁵⁴ Above, pp. 89–90.

⁵⁵ *CPR* 1385–9, p. 87; for Lyllyng, see above, p. 66; below, p. 114.

⁵⁶ *CPR* 1385–9, p. 82; below, pp. 146–7. John Say was also left out of this commission; he may have died in the intervening period.

often subordinate. As we have seen, this system included the central commissions, which continued to be issued until 1384, and the use of King's Bench as superior eyre, which was also active until early 1384.⁵⁷ The work of the JPs was certainly not yet the most important aspect of the local judicial system and, judging by the attitude of the government towards them in the 1380s, played a less important role at this time. Hence the political significance of their membership may have carried less weight than in the 1370s.

Bearing these comments in mind, the surviving evidence concerning the activities of the JPs may now be considered. The evidence for the Worcestershire bench consists of just two sessions in February 1384 and January 1385, which makes it rather difficult to draw any conclusions.⁵⁸ Worse, only the presiding justice, John Cassy, was named. However, Cassy's appearance is, in itself, significant, since, as we have seen, the pattern of naming the presiding justice had led to the listing of either the leading magnate or members of the gentry, some of them with legal training.⁵⁹ We therefore need to consider why it was Cassy who presided. Interestingly, one of the cases heard before Cassy was of some political importance, since it involved indictments for felony committed in Feckenham Forest. This case appears to have been directly linked to the continuing governmental concern over disorder in the forest.⁶⁰ Cassy was a baron of the exchequer, a justice of assize and also a local lord with landed interests in Droitwich and Elmbridge (Worcestershire) as well as in Gloucestershire.⁶¹ We do have to allow for the patchy survival of evidence but, although he had been appointed to the county bench from 1377, his presence at the sessions had never been mentioned before, not even in King's Bench or in the assize records.⁶² It is possible, therefore, that his emergence was related to a shift in the character of the working justices at this time, from gentry and nobility to 'professional' lawyers from the central administration (although, since several of these men had legal training, such distinctions were becoming increasingly blurred).⁶³ Significantly, when a case with strong political overtones like that involving Feckenham occurred, neither Warwick nor the Beauchamp affinity appears to have taken an interest, despite their theoretical dominance of the bench. Instead, the case was dealt with by

⁵⁷ Above, pp. 109–10.

⁵⁸ Putnam, *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, pp. 416–17.

⁵⁹ Above, pp. 71–2; [Appendix IIB](#).

⁶⁰ Putnam, *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, p. 416; above, pp. 90–2.

⁶¹ CAD III, pp. 323–4; HWRO 705:326; Putnam, *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, p. 422; Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, pp. 132–3, 230–1.

⁶² CPR 1377–81, p. 47.

⁶³ Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 54–72.

the issue of yet another central commission of oyer and terminer.⁶⁴ The apparent lack of interest shown by Warwick and his affinity in exercising their power as JPs suggests that the role of JP had become less attractive in these years as a method of influencing local politics than it had been in the 1370s. It should also be remembered that Warwick had control of the Worcestershire shrievalty. If the JPs had lost their determining powers, and were therefore less attractive to him as a means of asserting his power, he may have ensured that most of the important cases were heard before the deputy sheriff instead. This would explain the drop in number of surviving cases from Worcestershire heard before the JPs in the period. Of course, since so little evidence is available, such a conclusion can only be very tentative. However, the evidence from Warwickshire tends to corroborate these findings.

The records for the Warwickshire quarter sessions are much more abundant than those for Worcestershire. It must be said that, in Warwickshire, there is some evidence that the earl and his affinity continued to have an interest in using the county bench for their own purposes. For example, Warwick appeared as a JP in 1383, in a case which involved a recalcitrant former servant of the earl of Stafford. On this occasion, Warwick appears to have used his powers as a favour to his ally Stafford, although his appearance as a JP also sent out an important message concerning his authority in the county.⁶⁵ Similarly, in January 1384 the sessions were held, most unusually, at Birmingham, in the presence of Warwick's man, John Bermyngeham, the local lord. The indictments heard at these particular sessions seem to have related to a disagreement over land in Erdington which was subsequently acquired by Warwick. Bermyngeham, as a member of the Beauchamp affinity, may have been using his position as a JP to impose order, even if his influence was inhibited by the loss of his powers to determine the case.⁶⁶ It is noticeable, however, that these instances of Warwick and his men using the county bench as a means of extending their influence over local justice occur in the earlier part of the period, 1383–4. This was the period

⁶⁴ *CPR* 1381–5, p. 426. It was this commission in May 1384 from which Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp were omitted: above, p. 109.

⁶⁵ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, p. 161; for the relationship between Warwick and Stafford: above, pp. 56–7.

⁶⁶ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, p. 162. The indictments heard before Bermyngeham included theft from Thomas Erdington at Erdington by John Bentley and John Wyrley, and a second charge of theft from Richard Shobenhale of Aston by Simon Lichfeld and Henry Wasteneys. Lichfeld had acquired an interest in Pipe Hall in Erdington from Margery Pype. He then granted the reversion of the manor to Margery's uncle, Thomas Pype, abbot of Stoneleigh, who enfeoffed it to the earl. In 1386, Warwick settled the manor on Lichfeld and his wife for their lives. Perhaps Lichfeld's actions in 1384 were connected to the earl's purchase: BRL Miscellaneous Deeds 438073; *VCH Warwick*, vii, pp. 64–5.

when Gaunt was still dominant both at the centre and locally. Even if the JPs had lost their determining powers, the county bench must still have appeared an attractive means of recovering some of the authority which Warwick had lost to the duke. From 1384, with Gaunt's lessening control at the centre, Warwick had less need to exert his influence through a medium whose power had waned, although as we have seen, he did take the precaution of ensuring that his man, Nicholas Lyllyng, was associated to the bench in 1386, perhaps in an attempt to make certain that, in a county where he did not have the option of using his powers as sheriff, the earl could benefit from what influence there was to be had from the JPs.⁶⁷

However, despite these early attempts by the Beauchamp affinity to influence local politics through the Warwickshire bench, it should be emphasised that these cases were the exception rather than the rule. Warwick's appearance at the sessions in 1383 seems to be his only one before 1391, whilst Gaunt is also noticeable by his absence.⁶⁸ Most of the day-to-day work was done by two workhorses of the local administration, John Catesby and Robert Burgulon. Robert Stafford, whose surname may suggest that he was representing the Stafford interest,⁶⁹ appeared three times, and John Lord Clinton once.⁷⁰ This suggests that, in both Warwickshire and Worcestershire, more of the work was done by the 'professional' lawyers. This fact is particularly striking when it is emphasised that both benches were much enlarged compared to their average numbers in the 1370s and therefore more representative of political society at large than they had been before 1382.⁷¹ Despite their appointment to the benches, the majority of JPs do not appear to have been interested in using their powers. This is in direct contrast to the situation in the 1370s and the 1390s, when politically significant cases were heard by

⁶⁷ Above, p. 111.

⁶⁸ For Gaunt's involvement in the Warwickshire bench in 1381: above, pp. 94–5; for Warwick's role in the 1390s: below, pp. 180–4.

⁶⁹ Stafford was clearly of some standing in Warwickshire: he was elected as MP for the county eight times between 1376 and 1385: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 194, 196, 201, 213, 216, 218, 227. He was also popular as a witness in transactions concerning the Coventry region: *CAD* I, p. 432; III, p. 324; SBT DR 10/688; DR 18/1/56; ER 1/65, no. 457. He drops out of sight in c. 1393, although he did not die until 1400, and in 1398, he took out a pardon for supporting the Appellants: TNA C 67/30, m. 14; *CFR 1399–1405*, p. 79. His decline from prominence may be connected to the decline in the Staffords' fortunes in the early 1390s: below, p. 151.

⁷⁰ See [Appendix IIIA](#).

⁷¹ The Warwickshire commission issued in December 1382 was: Gaunt, Warwick, John Bermyngeham, Thomas Bermyngeham, William Burgh (assize justice), Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, John Clinton, William Purfrey, Thomas Ralegh, John Say, William Skipwith (assize justice), Robert Stafford. The Worcestershire commission was: Warwick, John Beauchamp of Holt, Robert Belknap (assize justice), Alexander Besford, John Botetourt, Henry Bruyn, Walter Cokesey, John Cassy (assize justice), David Hanemer (assize justice), Richard Ruyhall II, John Say, John atte Wode.

larger numbers of gentry JPs.⁷² The reason for this lack of gentry interest in the 1380s is that there were no cases of this sort. The cumulative effect of this evidence is to suggest that the role of the JPs diminished between 1382 and 1389 and this was probably because the determining powers had been removed. This explains in turn why the Appellants did not immediately issue new commissions on their assumption of power. The simple fact was that the JPs were not perceived as an essential element in the political power structures of the localities at this time. It was only on the king's resumption of power in 1389 that the real 'politicisation', and thus the importance, of the JPs began to grow, perhaps under the influence of the newly returned Gaunt.⁷³

Perhaps the most important element in local politics in the 1380s was a markedly decreased level of complaint from the region concerning the behaviour of Warwick and his affinity, although he was clearly still suspected of involvement in the disturbances in Feckenham.⁷⁴ After his exclusion from the peace commission in 1379–80 Warwick appears to have learnt his lesson and tempered his local rule accordingly.⁷⁵ On the other hand, the mounting tension between Lancaster and Warwick which had first arisen in the late 1370s continued, as Gaunt's expansion into Warwickshire collided with Warwick's determination to assert his own authority. Ironically, it was now Lancaster, his influence at the centre and over the king beginning to wane, who could not control his men. Tensions centred on three protagonists: the lawyer John Catesby, who, in the 1380s, was drawn into Warwick's circle;⁷⁶ William Bagot, Warwick's erstwhile retainer, who now served Lancaster;⁷⁷ and John Ray, whose legal skills led to an association with Gaunt (amongst others) and who was also a lifelong associate of Catesby.⁷⁸ Each of these disputes became entwined with the others, and

⁷² Above, pp. 70–2; Appendices IIA and IIB.

⁷³ See, for example, Storey, 'Commissions of the Peace', esp. pp. 132–3, 136–7, 139. Storey explicitly criticises the Appellants for not issuing new commissions. But in the same volume, Virgoe reaches a similar conclusion to the one stated here: R. Virgoe, 'The Crown and Local Government: East Anglia under Richard II', in du Boulay and Barron (eds.), *Reign of Richard II*, pp. 234–5. Below, pp. 180–4.

⁷⁴ Above, pp. 112–13, n. 64.

⁷⁵ In particular there are no surviving petitions to parliament or the council.

⁷⁶ Catesby was acting on Warwick's council by January 1387, although he almost certainly had links with the Beauchamp affinity before this: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125r; Appendix 1.

⁷⁷ Above, pp. 87–8.

⁷⁸ Ray represented Gaunt at the court in Cheylesmore. He also had links to Thomas Holland through Robert Dyngelay. In 1382, Ray acted as mainpernor for Holland, and, in the following year, was associated with Dyngelay and the group of men who were setting up the Guild of St George in Warwick: *VCH Warwicks*. VIII, p. 49; *CFR* 1377–83, p. 310; *CCR* 1381–5, p. 300. Ray's connection with Catesby went back to at least 1370, when they were co-defendants concerning an alleged attack on Richard Herthill's manor of Baginton. In 1383, Ray was one of the arbiters in the Ladbroke dispute, and in 1397 acted as trustee for the manor: TNA KB 27/439, m. 44; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 315, 334–5.

the complexities of the situation make it hard to unravel the course of events. But it is clear that each disagreement was centred on Coventry, where Lancaster had based his power in Warwickshire since the 1370s.⁷⁹

Both Bagot and Catesby had landed interests in and around Coventry and were therefore rivals for much of the property that became available in this area. For example, Catesby seems to have resented Bagot's acquisition of the manor of Baginton, since he recorded the dubious methods by which Bagot allegedly secured his rights there.⁸⁰ Catesby had both official and landed links with Coventry; the Catesbys had built up a considerable portfolio of holdings in and around Coventry, which included a life interest in the manor of Bubbenhall. The result was that, by 1375, the Black Prince had appointed Catesby steward of Coventry and the park at Cheylesmore.⁸¹ Meanwhile, in 1378–9, William Bagot became a resident member of Warwickshire political society when he purchased Baginton itself, situated just outside Coventry. Three years later he was pricked as sheriff for the first time.⁸² Bagot's purchase also led to his inclusion in the affairs of the town and he can often be found as a witness to transactions involving property there.⁸³ Unfortunately for the local peace, Bagot's presence at Baginton meant that he was a near neighbour of Catesby's manor of Bubbenhall.

It is no accident that Bagot's two-year term as sheriff (1382–4) coincided with the nascence of several local disputes in which he was involved. By July 1384 Bagot's relations with Catesby had deteriorated badly. This was the result of the former's partisan interference in the dispute between Catesby and Lewis and Alice Cardian over Ladbroke. Although only Catesby's version of events has survived, and any accusations made by him must be treated with caution as an *ex parte* statement, Bagot's previous record and independent surviving evidence of his disruptive influence in local politics do lend some credence to Catesby's allegations.⁸⁴ In 1382, Catesby was challenged in his possession of the manors of Ladbroke in south-eastern

⁷⁹ Above, p. 80.

⁸⁰ TNA E 41/394, m. 3; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 298.

⁸¹ For examples of the Catesbys' activities in the Coventry land market see *CAD* III, pp. 51–3, 68–70. He first acquired a life interest in Bubbenhall from his kinsman John Beauchamp of Holt in 1371: *CAD* IV, pp. 267–8, 429. The stewardship of Coventry was confirmed by Richard II, and Catesby continued to hold the two offices until 1384: *HP* II, pp. 501–3. See also N. W. Alcock, 'The Catesbys of Coventry: A Medieval Estate and its Archives', *Midland History*, 15 (1990), pp. 1–37.

⁸² SBT ER 1/65, nos. 458, 460, 452. Also in the 1380s, he bought Draycote and Wolston in the same region: *VCH Warks.* VI, pp. 39–40, 275.

⁸³ He was for example a feoffee to the abbot of Stoneleigh in 1383: *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 311–12; he also acted as witness to grants and leases by John Botetourt, Adam Peshale and Baldwin Freville II concerning lands in Pinley and Stivichall between 1383 and 1386: SBT DR 10/479, 485, 686, 87.

⁸⁴ For example, Bagot's involvement in the Vernon affair and his activities during the Aston dispute in the 1390s: above, pp. 87–8, and below, pp. 177–9.

Warwickshire and ‘Ladbroke’s manor’ in Tanworth in the west of the county, by the Cardians, who also claimed these properties; this was the dispute in which Bagot was to become involved in his capacity as sheriff in 1384.⁸⁵ By 1384, Catesby and Bagot were also at odds over the manor of Bubbenhall, just south of Coventry.⁸⁶ In the following year, the feud was seemingly still unresolved, for Catesby and the Beauchamp retainer Nicholas Lyllynng were the active commissioners in an inquiry concerning waste committed by Bagot on the Mowbray estates at Caludon.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, Bagot and Catesby were also in dispute over Bubbenhall mill.⁸⁸ It seems that their feud was so complex that no permanent resolution satisfactory to both parties could be found, their quarrel continuing into the 1390s, when it reignited during Richard’s tyranny.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, Bagot had also become involved in a feud with John Ray, Catesby’s associate. Ray was escheator of Warwickshire for the same term as Bagot was sheriff (1382–4), and it may be that he, too, owed his office to Lancaster’s influence.⁹⁰ Although Ray’s earliest associations may have been with the duke, his feud with Bagot, together with Catesby’s improving relations with Warwick, may have brought Ray into contact with the Beauchamp affinity as he attempted to defend himself against legal and extra-legal attacks from Bagot. Ray had already been in trouble with the central government in August 1377 for alleged corruption and malpractice during his time as alnager. An inquiry had led to lengthy proceedings against him in King’s Bench which were halted after he bought a general pardon in 1382.⁹¹ In 1383–4, however, Bagot revived the charges against Ray in a petition to the council. This may have been a weapon in a continuing dispute between Bagot and Ray, although the origins of the disagreement are shrouded in mystery. Bagot wanted the council to grant a commission of inquiry whose personnel was to include Bagot himself, the Lancastrian retainer John Pecche and two members of the upper echelons of Warwickshire society, John Lord Clinton and the king’s knight, Sir Baldwin Freville II.⁹² Bagot was not successful in obtaining this commission, however. This may have been the result of the rift between Gaunt and the king which became apparent at this time. It is possible that Richard did not trust the duke and his affinity sufficiently to allow the weapon of a commission of inquiry to be

⁸⁵ Post, ‘Ladbroke Dispute’, pp. 290–2, 314–17. ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 292, 297–8.

⁸⁷ *CPR* 1381–5, p. 508; *CIMisc* 1377–88, p. 169. They found that he had caused damage worth £82.

⁸⁸ *TNA E* 41/394, m. 3. ⁸⁹ Below, pp. 215–19.

⁹⁰ *List of Escheators*, p. 168. ⁹¹ *TNA KB* 27/467, *Rex*, m. 1; *C* 67/29.

⁹² *TNA SC* 8/293/14644. I have followed Mitchell’s wider definition of who constituted a king’s knight: Mitchell, ‘Knightly Household of Richard II’, pp. 9–26, 38–50, 233.

placed in their hands.⁹³ Moreover, we have seen that Richard seems to have jettisoned Lancaster's weapon of central commissions as part of his rejection of Gaunt himself. Instead, the charges against Ray in the *Rex* side of King's Bench were renewed in Trinity 1384, presumably at Bagot's instigation. Despite these charges against him, Ray was still able to secure the lease of the alnage for a further three years in August 1384. By this time he had connections to the Beauchamp affinity, since his mainpernors included Nicholas Warrewyk, who was linked to the earl.⁹⁴

By the end of 1384, the Bagot-Ray dispute had spiralled further out of control and at this point the government intervened directly. In December, Bagot was made to take out a bond to keep the peace towards Ray. Bagot's mainpernors were all members of the Lancastrian affinity, demonstrating the extent of his Lancastrian connections at this time.⁹⁵ But if Bagot was put under restraint at the end of 1384, Ray suffered an even more serious, if temporary, reversal in early 1385. By 28 March, he had been imprisoned in the Fleet 'for certain misprisions'. He remained there until 22 April, when he was released on condition that his mainpernors produced him in chancery to answer the charges against him; again, his mainpernors included a Beauchamp man, John Danyel.⁹⁶ This time, Ray lost the alnage of the county, which was granted to the Lancastrian retainer John Deyncourt.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, the proceedings against Ray in King's Bench continued unabated until Hilary 1387.⁹⁸

Thus it seems that the activities of respective members of the Beauchamp and Lancastrian affinities were leading to local conflict. As Lancaster struggled to retain an element of influence at the centre in the face of the king's dislike and distrust, so his control of affairs in Warwickshire began to slip, although it was not destroyed completely. This supports the argument that the politics of 1383–6 should be interpreted as a power struggle between the king and his uncles, rather than as a period in which Richard was irretrievably at odds with all the

⁹³ Above, pp. 100–1.

⁹⁴ TNA KB 27/493, *Rex*, m. 11d.; *CCR* 1381–5, pp. 574–5; [Appendix 1](#).

⁹⁵ *CCR* 1381–5, p. 599. Bagot's mainpernors were: John Deyncourt (the constable of Kenilworth), John Loudham, Hugh Maywode and John Brenchesley: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 265, 268, 271, 273.

⁹⁶ *CCR* 1381–5, pp. 542–3, 630. Since no records of proceedings against Ray survive in chancery, it is impossible to know whether the charges against him related to his time as alnager or to an entirely different set of misdeeds. For Danyel, see [Appendix 1](#).

⁹⁷ Deyncourt was granted the office on 10 April 1385, while Ray was still in prison: *CCR* 1381–5, pp. 574–5. Deyncourt's appointment suggests that Gaunt still had some influence at the centre.

⁹⁸ TNA KB 27/503, *Rex*, m. 14. After this the case disappears until 1395: below, pp. 179–80.

future Appellants.⁹⁹ From 1375, Warwick had been squeezed out of local government in the West Midlands by Gaunt; in 1384–5, however, Warwick's influence locally began to reassert itself, possibly, and ironically, because the king turned to him as a means of counterbalancing Lancaster's power. Both Warwick and the king were no doubt content when Gaunt left the country in July 1386.¹⁰⁰

At Gaunt's departure, therefore, it was not inevitable that within eighteen months Warwick would become one of the most implacable opponents of the king. It is true that the earl was not particularly close to the court and was increasingly marginalised by the king's preference for his own friends. He had also suffered from Richard's decidedly tactless handling of local affairs, particularly the incident concerning the abbey of Westminster. But these factors were not enough on their own to provoke Warwick's extreme reaction in November 1387.¹⁰¹ It has already been observed that there is no evidence that Warwick took any part in Arundel's or Gloucester's verbal assaults on Richard's rule, although he may well have been sympathetic to their grievances, particularly concerning the conduct of foreign policy.¹⁰² Why, therefore, and when, did his attitude change? It seems that Warwick's gradual alienation from the king, and Richard's increasing hostility to the earl, began in mid 1385 and escalated rapidly in 1387.

It was during the Scottish campaign in July 1385, in which Warwick participated, that he experienced firsthand Richard's mishandling of royal authority. As is well known, on the journey to Scotland, Ralph Stafford, Warwick's nephew and heir to Warwick's ally, the earl of Stafford, was killed by Sir John Holland, the king's half-brother. The murder had grave political implications for the king and his relationship with Stafford and Warwick. At first, Richard seemed to act decisively to placate Stafford. The king was reported to be furious and proceedings were initiated against Holland and his men in the household court of the verge, where the case was heard in the presence of the king, the marshal (Thomas Mowbray) and the steward (John Montacute). Proceedings were also begun in King's Bench.¹⁰³ But this reaction was soon tempered by Richard's desire to protect Holland. To begin with, there are signs that he may have delayed in bringing him to justice. It was not until 14 September, two months after the murder, that Holland's lands were declared forfeit.¹⁰⁴ Although this delay may have been the result of the

⁹⁹ Above, pp. 99–101. ¹⁰⁰ Above, pp. 107–18.

¹⁰¹ Above, pp. 100–1. ¹⁰² Above, p. 100.

¹⁰³ *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 365; *Polychronicon* ix, pp. 60–2; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 89–90; *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 123; *Knighiton's Chronicle*, p. 339; TNA KB 9/167, mm. 3–4. Mowbray had only been appointed to his family's hereditary office in the previous month: McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, p. 453, n. 1.

¹⁰⁴ *CFR* 1383–91, pp. 123–4.

intervening campaign in Scotland, there is other evidence to support the suspicion that Richard was not as quick to deal with the affair as he should have been. On 22 July, two days after the king had ordered the case to be heard before the court of the verge, a second writ was issued, removing the case to chancery. It seems that this writ was ignored, since two further writs with the same instructions were issued on 23 and 26 October.¹⁰⁵ This delay suggests that the case was stalled in the court closest to the king, perhaps by the king's own deliberate will. Such a dilatory approach can have done little to enhance Richard's reputation for swift and impartial justice, or to improve his relations with either the earl of Stafford or Warwick, who are depicted by the chroniclers acting together against Holland.¹⁰⁶ Admittedly, the case was difficult for the king, since it involved his own half-brother, but his handling of it, and Holland's eventual rehabilitation just two months later, can hardly have been satisfactory to the injured parties. Stafford was so aggrieved that he left the country in early 1386, even though he had come to terms with Holland to the extent of agreeing the details of a chantry to be built for Ralph Stafford's soul.¹⁰⁷ This distressing incident may have begun the real deterioration of relations between Richard and Warwick. It is possible that Warwick reacted angrily to Richard's handling of the situation and that Richard's response was to decide that the earl was yet another noble whom he could not trust. This may explain the appointment of the Leicestershire and Cheshire man John Calveley as sheriff of Warwickshire in late 1385, someone with no links to Warwick, who would later be retained for life by the king.¹⁰⁸

The result of Stafford's departure was that Warwick lost his closest ally in local politics and Stafford's personal influence was removed from the region. This situation did not immediately affect Warwick, since it appeared to be merely temporary. However, Stafford's unexpected death abroad in September/October 1386 altered the situation fundamentally.¹⁰⁹ The murder of Ralph Stafford now became imbued with additional implications. His death meant that the next heir, Stafford's second son, Thomas, was a minor, though luckily for Warwick he was old

¹⁰⁵ TNA KB 9/167, mm. 12, 2, 6. On 4 November, the case was also removed from King's Bench into chancery: KB 9/167, m. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *Polychronicon* IX, p. 79; *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 159.

¹⁰⁷ Holland had his lands restored to him on 1 November 1385: *CFR* 1383–91, p. 111. For Stafford's agreement with Holland in February 1386: *CPR* 1385–9, pp. 114, 122. Walker suggests that the Stafford affinity still held a grudge against Holland and his family (including his father-in-law Lancaster) in the 1390s: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 230–2.

¹⁰⁸ Calveley was retained for life by Richard in 1394: Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 284. Above, pp. 108–9.

¹⁰⁹ *CIPM* 1384–92, pp. 159–72.

enough to take an active interest in his own affairs. Shortly after the earl of Stafford's death, custody of all his lands was granted to the new earl of Stafford, his kinsman Nicholas Stafford and two others. This grant was revoked a month later, and Warwick, the earl of Stafford and Sir William Beauchamp were granted custody of the Stafford lands in Warwickshire at the farm of 2,000 marks per annum.¹¹⁰ The fact that governmental grants were in the hands of the reforming committee at this time was probably a crucial factor in Warwick's success in securing custody of what was for him the most important part of the Stafford inheritance, the lands in Warwickshire, but they could not help him replace the loss of his closest ally.¹¹¹

From 1386, the political landscape and balance of power in the West Midlands underwent further readjustment. In April 1386 John Lord Botetourt died and was succeeded by his granddaughter and her husband, Hugh Burnell. As we have seen, Botetourt had been on good terms with Warwick, and his lands in north Warwickshire, Worcestershire and southern Staffordshire had complemented Warwick's own.¹¹² In contrast it seemed that Burnell and Warwick were likely to be less close, since Burnell's affiliations at this time were with the court and Warwick's relations with the king were beginning to deteriorate. Burnell's first marriage had been to the daughter of Richard's chancellor, Michael de la Pole; in 1388 he was amongst those expelled from the royal household by the Appellants.¹¹³ Thus, the arrival of Burnell in the north of the region at a time when Warwick's relations with the king were worsening would have placed added pressure on the earl, particularly in the light of the loss of his ally, the earl of Stafford.

By April 1386, tensions between Richard and Warwick were becoming more apparent with a second terse order to Warwick to withdraw from Bishopston in Gower.¹¹⁴ These tensions may have been aggravated further by proceedings in chancery and King's Bench concerning the custody of the valuable Pecche inheritance in Warwickshire. Sir John Pecche II had died earlier in 1386, leaving two underage daughters.¹¹⁵ Several of his manors were held from Warwick, and before Pecche's death it seems that the earl had contrived to persuade Pecche to transfer his

¹¹⁰ The first grant was made on 23 January 1387 to the earl of Stafford, Nicholas Stafford, John Sewell and John Fremyngheam. The second arrangement was made on 25 February. John Lord Neville was also included in this grant. The lands included the Wolfords and Rugby: *CFR* 1383–91, p. 173; Rawcliffe, *Earls of Stafford*, pp. 11–12. For the Staffords' lands in Warwickshire: above, pp. 56–7.

¹¹¹ The full effects of Stafford's death were not felt by Warwick until 1392: below, pp. 154–5.

¹¹² Above, p. 59; *CFR* 1383–91, p. 139; *CIPM* 1384–92, pp. 77–9.

¹¹³ *Polychronicon* IX, p. 116; *Historia Vitae*, p. 116; *Knighton's Chronicle*, p. 429; *GEC* II, p. 435.

¹¹⁴ *CCR* 1385–9, p. 53; above, p. 97.

¹¹⁵ *CPR* 1385–9, pp. 179–80; *CFR* 1383–91, p. 144.

lands to trustees, at least one of whom, Thomas Purfrey, was Warwick's agent.¹¹⁶ But the escheator made a return unfavourable to Warwick, saying that Pecche had died seised of the properties and that custody should pertain to the king.¹¹⁷ The case was not resolved for another year, when in Trinity 1387 at Coventry, the jury, unperturbed by the brooding presence of the king, found for Warwick.¹¹⁸ Such a dispute can have done little to improve relations between Warwick and Richard.

In 1385–6, Warwick's brother Sir William, despite being a member of the royal household, also found that he had enemies at court. Beauchamp had held the custody of part of the Hastings of Pembroke inheritance since 1378.¹¹⁹ But in late 1385 a petition to the king on behalf of the Hastings heir asked that Beauchamp should not be pardoned for wastes committed on the Hastings estates and that he should lose custody of the inheritance. The government responded with a writ of *scire facias* for Beauchamp to appear in chancery.¹²⁰ This was followed by a commission of inquiry into waste by Beauchamp on the Pembroke inheritance, issued in July 1386.¹²¹ Regardless of Beauchamp's innocence or guilt in the matter, it seems that the king himself, or his close advisers, were behind this attack on Beauchamp. The Pembroke lands lay in a politically sensitive region, concentrated in Wales and the Marches.¹²² By 1386, it was clear that the king favoured a policy of granting strategically and politically sensitive offices and lands in this region to those closest to him.¹²³ In this context, the Pembroke lands represented a rich prize, and it is possible that the king aimed to take the custodianship from Beauchamp in order to give it to one of his friends. Beauchamp's response to this attack was to petition for a pardon during

¹¹⁶ Pecche held Honiley, Fenny Compton, Avon Dassett and Wormleighton from Warwick: *VCH Warwicks*. III, p. 121; V, pp. 48, 67–8, 220–1. The earl claimed that Pecche had enfeoffed these manors to Richard Kyngton, Robert Byron, Thomas Purfrey and Thomas Hawe the day before his death, and that since he was not seised of the properties on his death, custody pertained to the earl. Richard Kyngton may have had connections to Warwick. Purfrey certainly had long-standing connections with the earl, and since the earl himself defended his rights in chancery, it appears that the feoffees were acting on his behalf: TNA C 260/99 (8); [Appendix 1](#).

¹¹⁷ The escheator was Thomas Blythe; it is uncertain what his connections were, but he does not seem to have favoured Warwick. Perhaps a clue may lie in the fact that his inquiry was carried out at Kenilworth, Gaunt's stronghold. Since Pecche was a retainer of Lancaster, Blythe may have been acting on the duke's behalf. Perhaps this was another episode in the struggle between Gaunt and Warwick. On the other hand, he may have been influenced by the king himself: *List of Escheators*, p. 169; TNA C 260/99 (8); KB 27/501, *Rex*, m. 14d.

¹¹⁸ TNA KB 27/505, *Rex*, m. 9; below, pp. 125–7. ¹¹⁹ *CPR 1377–81*, p. 170.

¹²⁰ TNA SC 8/215/10708.

¹²¹ *CPR 1385–9*, pp. 257–8. The commissioners found him guilty of damage worth £500: *CIMisc 1377–88*, pp. 198–200.

¹²² These included the lordships of Abergavenny and Pembroke: *CIPM 1384–92*, pp. 343–66; R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society*, pp. 466, 471.

¹²³ Above, pp. 99, 105–6.

the Wonderful Parliament in October 1386, the wording making it clear that the accusations were maliciously brought by his enemies while he was abroad on the king's service and in no position to defend himself. It is likely that this attempt to dispossess Beauchamp was not only unsuccessful in itself, but was also a major contributing factor to his actions in support of the Appellants in December 1387.¹²⁴

At the Wonderful Parliament in October 1386 the growing dissatisfaction with the government's conduct of the war and its finances exploded into demands for the impeachment of one of the main architects of English foreign policy, Michael de la Pole.¹²⁵ Richard's intemperate reaction to these demands made it apparent why Lancaster had sought to restrain his nephew. Although the situation in 1386 was undoubtedly serious, the circumstances of the 1386 parliament were similar in many ways to those of 1376. Both crises were the result of the linked problems of finance and defence, and both led to a parliamentary attack on the ministers deemed responsible for the mismanagement of the policy. There were, however, also fundamental differences between the two parliaments, which led to their radically contrasting impact. In 1376, Edward III's old age and illness had made it obvious that he was no longer responsible for government. Leadership had devolved to John of Gaunt, who was able to ensure the reassertion of royal authority by the simple expedient of waiting until parliament had dissolved.¹²⁶ In 1386, however, Richard II was clearly capable of exerting power, although he was still very young. It soon became apparent that he was not willing to bow even temporarily to the pressure put on him by parliament. His reply to the Commons that he would not dismiss a scullion from his household at their request made it clear that he was not prepared to accept a compromise. His attitude forced the noble leaders of the opposition to raise the spectre of Edward II's fate to force his compliance.¹²⁷ It is possible that, if Lancaster had been present, he would either not have allowed the crisis to develop in the first place or would have attempted to restrain the king from his excessive reaction. Gaunt's absence, combined with the king's youth and impetuosity, led to the punitive measures imposed by parliament in the form of a commission of government for one year, designed to curtail the king's executive powers.¹²⁸

Warwick's part in the proceedings of 1386 is unclear. He attended the parliament, and one chronicler names him with Gloucester and Arundel as a chief opponent of the king; recently, Saul has followed this version.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ *CPR* 1385–9, p. 222; below, pp. 131–2. ¹²⁵ Above, pp. 99–101.

¹²⁶ Above, pp. 61–6. ¹²⁷ *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 352–63.

¹²⁸ *RP* III, p. 221; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 104–7; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 157–64.

¹²⁹ *Eulogii Historiarum*, p. 360; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 177–80. Warwick was named as a trier of petitions at the parliament: *RP* III, p. 215.

However, despite the growing tension between Warwick and Richard and the treatment of Warwick's brother by the king, this seems to be a mistake by the chronicler, who was writing after the events of 1387–8 and read Warwick's later involvement back into the Wonderful Parliament. No other chronicler mentions him as part of the opposition to the king in 1386 and, most tellingly, the counter-appeal brought against Warwick in 1397 makes no mention of his involvement in the commission of 1386. If Warwick had been connected at all to the events of 1386, they would surely have been included in the charges against him, as they were in those against Arundel and Gloucester.¹³⁰ Warwick's involvement in the 1386 parliament was probably confined to tacit rather than active support for Arundel and Gloucester. His transformation into one of the leading opponents of the king can therefore be dated to the twelve months between the end of parliament in 1386 and his appearance at Harringay in November 1387.

After the Wonderful Parliament, the ruling council began the task of reforming the government, especially the royal finances.¹³¹ The members of the council were clearly sympathetic to Warwick, since the local officers appointed in the West Midlands in November and December 1386 were men connected either to him or to his brother: Sir William's man, John Parker of Olney, became sheriff of Warwickshire, and Warwick's man, John Morant, escheator of Worcestershire.¹³² As we have seen, Warwick was also able to obtain custody of the Stafford lands in February 1387.¹³³ But, unsurprisingly, in the same month Richard II's defiance of his opponents became more aggressive. In January 1387 he signalled his intentions by his appointment of Beauchamp of Holt as steward of the royal household in defiance of parliament's wishes. On 9 February, he left London with the dual intention of blunting the powers of the commission and gathering support for himself. He then began his nine-month 'gyration' through the south, the midlands and Wales.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ For example, Walsingham first links Warwick to Gloucester and Arundel during 1387, when he says that Richard and de Vere were plotting against all the future Appellants: Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 161. Similarly, the monk of Evesham also dates Warwick's rebellion to 1387: *Historia Vitae*, pp. 105–9. For the appeal against Warwick in 1397 see *RP* III, pp. 351, 376–7.

¹³¹ In Warwickshire, commissions of inquiry were issued into waste at two alien priories which had been granted out: *CPR* 1385–9, pp. 262, 384. A joint inquiry was also issued for Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire concerning the evasion of subsidies by merchants: *CPR* 1385–9, p. 320; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 118–20; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 164–6.

¹³² *L&I* 9, p. 148; *List of Escheators*, p. 178; for Olney and Morant, see [Appendix 1](#).

¹³³ Above, pp. 120–1.

¹³⁴ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 161–4; *Polychronicon* IX, pp. 93–5; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 100–2; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 445–7; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 105–10; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 169–72, and p. 471 for Richard's itinerary; Bennett, *Revolution of 1399*, pp. 27–9.

Historians have paid a great deal of attention to Richard's activities during his gyration, including his attempts to influence elections through the sheriffs; his formation of a fledgling royal affinity and armed following; and the Questions to the Judges.¹³⁵ But comparatively little has been written about the impact of these activities on local political society. Similarly, one highly significant aspect of Richard's policy during these months has gone almost unnoticed, his use of King's Bench in its role of superior eyre.

The continuing employment of King's Bench as a court of first instance by Edward III and Lancaster as a method of controlling local disorder has already been discussed. For much of the fourteenth century it remained a powerful tool with which the king could bring the full force of his justice into the localities.¹³⁶ By contrast, Richard's use of the superior eyre in 1387 was not to reassert royal power in regions that had become particularly disordered. In fact, when King's Bench arrived in Coventry in June 1387, the levels of disorder in Warwickshire were far lower than they had been in the late 1370s.¹³⁷ The deployment of the superior eyre may have been motivated in part by Richard's need for money, since he was cut off from his usual source of income in Westminster.¹³⁸ But above all, this use of the superior eyre was intimately bound up with his attitude towards the role of the king within local government. It appears that Richard had his own ideas about the relationship between ruler and ruled which were in direct contradiction to the more usual unspoken understanding between the king and his subjects about the nature of law and government. At a politically tense time, he sought to intrude royal power into the localities in an aggressive manner. Richard's use of King's Bench in 1387 explains the inclusion of the CJKB, Robert Tresilian, in the Appellants' later attack in parliament against the king's advisers and close associates. Henry Knighton, who was well placed at Leicester to observe these events, comments on the impact of King's Bench in Coventry, especially Tresilian's involvement, and the numbers summoned, which Knighton puts at 2,000.¹³⁹ Ironically, Richard was resurrecting part of the policy used by Gaunt which Richard had initially rejected, if for very different reasons. It

¹³⁵ Jones, *Royal Policy of Richard II*, pp. 36–46; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 447–51; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 110–19; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 171–5.

¹³⁶ Above, pp. 72–4.

¹³⁷ Above, pp. 83–9.

¹³⁸ Tuck has shown that Richard was having financial problems in this period: Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 110–11. For the financial aspect of the superior eyre: Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 189–92.

¹³⁹ *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 390–1; for the attack on Tresilian: *RP* III, pp. 229–37, esp. articles nos. 9, 10, 13, 18, 25. For Richard's general attitude towards the law, above, pp. 24–25.

was the active implementation of Richard's intrusively hostile mode of rule during the summer of 1387 that finally pushed Warwick into open opposition.

Since Coventry was part of Richard's inheritance from the Black Prince, it was natural that he should visit it. He arrived on 10 June and remained there for three days, during which time the superior eyre was sitting.¹⁴⁰ One of its functions was to unearth alleged cases of corruption and extortion by local officials, those serving both the crown and local lords. Since Warwick was the dominant lord in the county, many of these officials had links with him, for example Roger Wyrley and William Lewkenore, respectively his steward and bailiff at Tanworth. Similarly, Beauchamp men who had held royal offices also came under suspicion, including the current sheriff, John Parker of Olney, and Nicholas Warrewyk, who was the bailiff of Barchilway hundred.¹⁴¹ An intrusion by King's Bench into local affairs may have been regarded as a nuisance to be endured but in June 1387 additional tensions resulting from the crisis at the centre accentuated its impact. Although Warwick had not been directly involved in the opposition of 1386, the presence of King's Bench created a situation where he felt himself to be directly under hostile scrutiny.

Signs of an unusual degree of tension caused by the presence of King's Bench at Coventry are evident in the court records. The most dramatic example was the case of Nicholas Warrewyk, who was accused of extortion. This was too much to bear for William Allesley, a long-serving coroner. According to the record in King's Bench, Allesley threatened one of the jurors in the presence of the king himself, saying that if the juror had been involved in bringing the indictments against Warrewyk, 'it were better for you if you had never been born'. Most unusually, Allesley's threat is quoted verbatim in the text, which gives a sense of immediacy and suggests that his actions were so out of the ordinary that they deserved recognition in the court records. Allesley was brought before the justices on charges of threatening the jury and extortion in his office as collector of expenses for MPs. The jury found him not guilty. Warrewyk, meanwhile, was put under bonds of £200 for his good behaviour, and his mainpernors provided a further guarantee of £100.¹⁴²

If Allesley's acquittal seems unusual considering the circumstances of the case, then the explanation may lie in the wholesale non-cooperation by the trial juries, and by local political society as a whole.

¹⁴⁰ TNA KB 27/505; Saul, *Richard II*, p. 471.

¹⁴¹ TNA KB 27/506, *Rex*, mm. 7, 16, 19d.; [Appendix 1](#).

¹⁴² TNA KB 27/505, *Rex*, mm. 16, 19d.

The Allesley case was not the only one in which a jury reached a verdict unfavourable to the king; the case of *Rex v. Beauchamp* concerning the Pecche lands was also determined in favour of Warwick, whilst John Olney, the current sheriff, was acquitted of corruption.¹⁴³ These verdicts in favour of Warwick and his men may have been the result of the earl's influence in the region, but they may also be connected to the jurors' unwillingness to find against men with whom they would have to live after King's Bench had gone.¹⁴⁴ They may indeed have closed ranks against the unwelcome intrusion of a king whose previous actions had done little to endear him to political society. Significantly, at the presentment stage, where the juries were more co-operative, there is evidence that the empanelling of the grand jury was subject to royal influence. The current sheriff, John Parker, empanelled several Beauchamp men, such as Sir Ailred Trussell, Guy Spyney and Peter Holt, but they were not chosen.¹⁴⁵ This suggests that the king distrusted Warwick's influence locally and exerted pressure on the process of picking the jurors to make sure the earl's men were not chosen. Nevertheless, Richard was still unable to assert his will over the increasingly hostile members of Warwickshire political society and the trial jurors continued to return verdicts in favour of their friends, neighbours and associates.

Richard's use of King's Bench was not the only royal policy to affect Warwick's interests directly. The king continued to 'gyrate' around the West Midlands, arriving in Worcester on 8 August.¹⁴⁶ In this month, Richard was beginning to recruit men into his nascent affinity and, whilst he was at Worcester, he retained Sir John Russell, a member of the Beauchamp affinity. With his three manors in the county, Russell was one of the more prominent members of Worcestershire gentry society.¹⁴⁷ The geographical position of his estates in the heartland of Warwick's lands meant that for many years he had looked to the earl for lordship.¹⁴⁸ In March 1383 their relationship was formalised by an indenture of retainer for life, Russell receiving the considerable sum of £20 per annum in peace and £40 in war.¹⁴⁹ Although Russell had never been particularly active in the Beauchamp affinity or in local office, his defection nevertheless angered Warwick, who cut off Russell's fee, forcing the king to

¹⁴³ TNA KB 27/505, *Rex*, mm. 9, 19d.; above, pp. 121–2.

¹⁴⁴ For similar resistance by jurors, see Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 201–6.

¹⁴⁵ TNA KB 9/1405, m. 31.

¹⁴⁶ Saul, *Richard II*, p. 471. He stayed there until 13 August.

¹⁴⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 187; *CPR* 1385–9, p. 372. Russell held Strensham (his main seat), Peopleton and Dormston: *VCH Worcs.* iv, pp. 66, 148, 203–4.

¹⁴⁸ Above, pp. 43–4. ¹⁴⁹ *CPR* 1381–5, p. 238; [Appendix 1](#).

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

compensate his new knight.¹⁵⁰ Warwick's anger is hardly surprising considering the political context of Russell's defection, which followed hard on the heels of the prosecution of many of his men in King's Bench. The king was known to be attempting to recruit an armed retinue, and Russell's defection may have appeared to Warwick not just as an insult to, and betrayal of, his lordship, but as an act of outright aggression by the king.¹⁵¹

The reasons behind Russell's defection to the king are difficult to fathom. Goodman suggests that the cause may have been a property dispute between the earl and Russell. This suggestion finds some support in a 1397 grant to Russell of land in Earl's Croome, Boughton and Strensham and rent in Eckington, all of which had been forfeited by Warwick. The text of the grant states that Russell had previously claimed the lands as his.¹⁵² A second clue to Russell's defection can be found in the dispute with Nicholas Lylling in 1392–3; several of the men accused of the murder of Russell's bailiff were tenants of Warwick at Earl's Croome.¹⁵³ Although all this evidence relates to the period after Russell had left Warwick's service, there is still good reason to believe that a dispute over land around Earl's Croome was the cause. Such was Warwick's dominance over the legal system in Worcestershire that he would have been able to suppress any case detrimental to his own interest. This in turn may have fuelled Russell's resentment. It is noticeable that the disputes involving Russell and the Beauchamp affinity in the 1390s were not in the first instance conducted through the law courts, but through processes over which Warwick had little control, for example impeachment in parliament.¹⁵⁴ It is perhaps not surprising therefore that Russell took the opportunity provided by the king's presence at Worcester to air his grievances to a higher authority. The king, in turn, was no doubt happy to be able to offer support to one of Warwick's own men, but the cost was the further alienation of Warwick.

¹⁵⁰ *CPR* 1381–5, p. 238; Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, p. 150; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 214; Saul, *Richard II*, p. 180. Compared to men such as Henry Ardern or Nicholas Lylling, who were regularly feoffees or witnesses to the earl, Russell's involvement in this aspect of the life of the Beauchamp affinity was minimal. He was elected MP for Worcestershire once under the earl's auspices in 1378: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 201. However, he was never chosen as deputy sheriff or escheator and neither was he appointed to any judicial commissions, although he was appointed to the enlarged county bench in 1382: *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 138, 246.

¹⁵¹ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 161–2; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 108–9.

¹⁵² *CPR* 1396–9, pp. 222, 275; Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 150–1. Warwick had only acquired Earl's Croome in 1375–6, when the manor had been claimed by the Hambury family: *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 316–17.

¹⁵³ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 269; below, pp. 167–70.

¹⁵⁴ Below, pp. 170–5.

Although Warwick was affected personally and politically by the activities of King's Bench and the loss of Russell, his decision to rebel should also be viewed in the wider context of Richard's actions in 1387. Richard's attempts to influence elections to parliament through the sheriffs, his policy of gathering an armed retinue and his Questions to the Judges were all acts which undermined deliberately the laws and unspoken rights and customary modes of ruling which protected the king's subjects.¹⁵⁵ Unsurprisingly, when the sheriffs were asked if they could return MPs who would support the king, they reacted by stating the right of electors to choose whomsoever they wanted. This should not be taken as a statement of the normal attitude in the localities towards elections, since MPs were often connected to a member of the nobility. Rather, it should be seen as a statement of defiance at the king's attempts to breach unspoken traditions and impose his own wishes on his people. Similarly, when the sheriffs were asked whether they would be able to raise military support for the king, they replied that the commons all supported his noble opponents. Given Richard's actions in 1386–7, this is hardly surprising. By revealing that he was creating an armed following, he can only have succeeded in alarming public opinion even further. Whether the political leaders of the shires were directly touched by Richard's policies (as in the case of the Warwickshire gentry), or only heard the reports of his intentions, the king's actions threatened them all. In the light of this threat, it is not surprising that, when Warwick, Gloucester and Arundel met at Harringay in November 1387, the Westminster chronicler reported that great numbers of gentry flocked to support them.¹⁵⁶

Of all the king's actions at this time, the final straw for Warwick was probably the news of the king's Questions to the Judges, which became general knowledge in September 1387. The Questions represented an attempt by the king to widen the bounds of treason in order to encompass the activities of his opponents in 1386. Once again, Richard showed himself willing to tamper with the accepted forms of the common law in order to achieve his own ends. Since the two assemblies of the justices took place at Shrewsbury and Nottingham, the news did not have far to travel to reach Warwick's ears. Richard's attempts to keep the Questions secret suggests that he intended to use them as a weapon against his opponents and against the commission of 1386 when he felt that the

¹⁵⁵ For what follows, see Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 161–2; *Historia Vitae*, p. 106; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 447–8; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 112–14; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 172–3.

¹⁵⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 211. Normally, there was considerable noble influence on county elections: McFarlane, 'Parliament and "Bastard Feudalism"', pp. 1–12; L. Clark, 'Magnates and their Affinities in the Parliaments of 1386–1421', in Britnell and Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy*, pp. 128–33, 134–5, 138–48.

time was right.¹⁵⁷ Even though he had not been directly involved in the events of 1386, Warwick had had his own recent and direct experiences of Richard's attitude towards kingship, and news of the Questions can only have served to heighten his sense of alarm. It is probable that the earl's decision to join Gloucester and Arundel in arms was reached in September/October 1387. By 13 November, Warwick, with his retinue, was at Harringay and he was to play a key part in the campaign that followed.¹⁵⁸

Warwick's standing and importance were well appreciated by contemporary chroniclers, but his role in the events of late 1387 has tended to be underemphasised by modern historians, who are perhaps too much influenced by Adam of Usk's damning portrait of the earl's behaviour in 1397.¹⁵⁹ Although the Westminster writer and the author of the *Polychronicon* were drawing on a source sympathetic to Warwick, their account of his role and aims in the Appellant rising cannot be discounted entirely.¹⁶⁰ According to these chroniclers, Michael de la Pole urged the king to have Warwick put to death because he was the ringleader of the opposition. The king, however, refused, because of the respect in which Warwick was held.¹⁶¹ There may be some truth in this story. Although Warwick was not the leader of the opposition movement, his endorsement of it as a hitherto loyal noble was a powerful blow to the king and a dramatic coup for his opponents. According to the chroniclers, Warwick's motive in joining the Appellants was to defeat the men around the king who had misled him with false counsel. He is depicted arguing strongly against the idea of deposing Richard and advocating instead action against de Vere, who was gathering an army in Cheshire.¹⁶² The result was the rout of de Vere at Radcot Bridge and the virtual imprisonment of the king.

It can be argued, of course, that the loyal speeches put into Warwick's mouth were no more than an expression of Appellant propaganda, designed to ease the consciences of the rebels by blaming his 'evil counsellors', thus disguising the unpalatable truth that they had rebelled against the king. Certainly, it seems unlikely that Warwick would have been quite as eloquent as the sources suggest. But there is nothing to

¹⁵⁷ *Polychronicon* IX, pp. 98–102; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 106–8; *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 392–400; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 116–17; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 173–5.

¹⁵⁸ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 163–4; *Historia Vitae*, p. 110; *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 402–3; *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 211.

¹⁵⁹ Below, p. 194.

¹⁶⁰ Introduction to the *Westminster Chronicle*, pp. xv, liv, lxiv.

¹⁶¹ *Polychronicon* IX, p. 105; *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 209.

¹⁶² *Polychronicon* IX, pp. 110–12; *Westminster Chronicle*, pp. 219–21; Oliver, *Parliament and Political Pamphleteering*, pp. 148–50.

show that he did not believe in the sentiments thus expressed; he may genuinely have felt that he was acting out of loyalty to save the king from misguided counsel regarding home and foreign affairs. His past record in government supports this view; for nearly twenty years Warwick had been a loyal member of the nobility.¹⁶³ He was certainly not a natural or impetuous rebel, if any member of the nobility can ever be called that. The events of 1385–7 show that in fact Warwick was in fact very slow to take sides, despite severe provocation by the king. The depiction of Thomas Beauchamp as a man moved by loyalty to his monarch cannot easily be dismissed. Nor can the evidence that it was Richard's goading of him, especially in 1387, and especially in the earl's own power base, that finally drove him into active opposition.

The rebellion of 1387 was led by five nobles but had the tacit support of many of their peers. For example, Ralph Basset of Drayton famously remarked that he would not risk getting his head broken for the sake of Robert de Vere. Similarly, there is little sign of any noble support for de Vere's attempt to recruit an armed force in November/December 1387.¹⁶⁴ The king's actions had alienated his natural supporters in a crisis, the nobility and gentry. Most dramatically of all, Sir William Beauchamp, a household knight and holder of a key military office, risked royal anger to support the Appellants' actions. The chroniclers record that in December 1387 Beauchamp, as Captain of Calais, would not allow the fugitive Michael de la Pole into the town and sent him back to England.¹⁶⁵ Knighton is the only chronicler to embellish this incident and record the aftermath of Beauchamp's actions. According to Knighton, Beauchamp also refused to surrender Calais to the French. As a result of this defiance, he was imprisoned.¹⁶⁶ Although these stories may be apocryphal, there is circumstantial evidence that there was some truth behind them. First, there was the fact that Beauchamp had already been the victim of an attempt by the king and his friends to eject him from the custodianship of the Pembroke lands in 1386.¹⁶⁷ As

¹⁶³ For the problems of dealing with statements of principle: above, pp. 13–17.

¹⁶⁴ *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 406–7; Myres, 'Campaign of Radcot Bridge', pp. 20–33; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 118–19; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 187–8.

¹⁶⁵ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 169; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 113–14; *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 418–19. Palmer has argued that Beauchamp remained loyal to Richard and even aided him in his secret negotiations with France. He explains the de la Pole episode as a cover story invented to avoid accusations of treason. Much of Palmer's evidence is based on one French source, however, and does not take into account Beauchamp's close affiliation with his brother or the attack on his custody of the Pembroke inheritance by the court circle. Since there is no suggestion in any English chronicle that Beauchamp was linked in any way to Richard's circle in 1387, it seems more likely that Beauchamp was acting in support of the Appellants, not the king; Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, pp. 105–19. See also Catto, 'Sir William Beauchamp', pp. 39–42.

¹⁶⁶ *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 404–7, 428–19. ¹⁶⁷ Above, pp. 122–3.

a result, his relations with the king and his circle cannot have been easy and may have led him to defy them. Second, the chroniclers relate the rumours circulating in 1387 that Richard intended to surrender Calais and Guînes to France. The charges brought against the king's friends in 1388 also included one of treasonable negotiations with France.¹⁶⁸ Even if Beauchamp did not actually refuse to surrender Calais, Knighton's story may have some basis in fact, if Beauchamp knew of the negotiations with France and refused to countenance them. In addition, Richard himself had threatened in 1386 to call on the king of France against his enemies; Beauchamp's actions suggest that he was suspicious of Richard's, and his advisers', motives.¹⁶⁹ Finally, shortly after the king regained power, Beauchamp was deprived of his captaincy. Was this the result of his perceived disobedience in 1387?¹⁷⁰

Following the fiasco of Radcot Bridge and the flight of the king's friends, Richard became a virtual prisoner of the Appellants. They were now faced with the dilemma of how to deal with him. Initially, they may have considered the most radical course of action possible: deposition. The Whalley Chronicle is the only source to suggest that the Appellants may have deposed Richard for three days in late December 1387, but the circumstances surrounding these events make this a plausible suggestion.¹⁷¹ Other chroniclers record that the idea of deposition was discussed by the Appellants. There was certainly no shortage of candidates to replace Richard amongst his opponents. Both his uncle, Gloucester, and his cousin, Bolingbroke, were not far removed from the immediate succession, especially since Richard had no children. But the situation in 1387 was very different from that of the only precedent in 1326–7, when Edward II's deposition had been expedited by the existence of a son and heir who was nearly of an age to rule. The very fact that there was no obvious heir, coupled with the presence of two possible claimants, both with good claims to the crown, created a dilemma. It would have been near-impossible to favour the claims of Gloucester over Bolingbroke or vice versa. Also, the strongest claim of all lay with Gaunt, who was out of the country; neither his son nor his younger brother could succeed to the throne with impunity whilst Lancaster was still alive, and the Appellants

¹⁶⁸ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 164; *Polychronicon* IX, p. 103; *Historia Vitae*, p. 109; *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 205; *RP* III, pp. 230–43, esp. articles 23, 27–32, and article 16 of the impeachment of Beauchamp of Holt, John Salisbury and others.

¹⁶⁹ *Knighton's Chronicle*, p. 218. Richard and his council also discussed asking for the help of the king of France in November 1387: *Westminster Chronicle*, pp. 210–14; Saul, *Richard II*, p. 186.

¹⁷⁰ Beauchamp had been removed from the post by April 1390: *Foedera* III, p. 57.

¹⁷¹ Clarke, *Fourteenth Century Studies*, pp. 91–5; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 119–20; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 189–91; Bennett, *Revolution of 1399*, p. 30.

would have been well aware that Gaunt himself would never countenance such a move.¹⁷² For these reasons alone, Richard's deposition was politically impossible, and, in the eyes of the Appellants, would only have led to more internal discord. It is also very doubtful that they would have had the support to do so. Instead, they decided to lay the blame for Richard's misrule on his friends and counsellors and hope that the king's actions in 1386–7 were the result of his youth and inexperience.

After the events of December 1387, the chronicle sources become less informative about Warwick's role in the proceedings of the Merciless Parliament. The earl seems to have been aligned with the two more hard-line Appellants, Gloucester and Arundel, since he supported the controversial sentence of death against Simon Burley.¹⁷³ In the West Midlands, signs of the Appellants' tightening grip on government become evident in appointments to office; the Warwickshire MPs for the February 1388 parliament were William Bagot (now a Mowbray and Bolingbroke man) and Warwick's retainer Guy Spyney. In Worcestershire, Nicholas Lyllyng and Sir Hugh Cheyne, a man with links to the Mortimers – whose estates Warwick still controlled – were elected.¹⁷⁴ If the Appellants ensured that members of their affinities were elected to parliament, they also ensured support locally by removing officers seen to be unfavourable to them. In Warwickshire, the sheriff appointed in November 1387, George Castell, was replaced in January 1388 by Richard Assheby from Leicestershire. Assheby's political associations remain obscure, but evidently he was acceptable to the Appellants. Castell had served the Black Prince and he appears to have retained a link to Richard, which may explain his temporary loss of office.¹⁷⁵

The extreme measures endorsed by the Merciless Parliament were the result of the position in which the Appellants found themselves. Once they had opposed the king with armed force, it was impossible for them to retreat, partly out of fear of what the king might do in retaliation and partly because they were caught up in the momentum of events. In particular, they were propelled by the anger of the Commons, who, as representatives of lesser landed political society, had

¹⁷² For Gaunt's attitude to kingship: above, pp. 100–1, 123 and below, pp. 154–5.

¹⁷³ Favent, *Historia Mirabilis Parliamenti*, p. 21; Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 174; *Historia Vitae*, p. 118; *Westminster Chronicle*, pp. 329–31; Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, p. 47. The most recent account of the Wonderful Parliament can be found in Oliver, *Parliament and Political Pamphleteering*, pp. 142–73.

¹⁷⁴ *HP* II, pp. 99–103, 545–7; III, pp. 603–5; IV, pp. 433–4. Cheyne had links with the Mortimers. His election can be explained by the fact that the Mortimer inheritance was in the hands of Arundel and Warwick at this time.

¹⁷⁵ *L&I* 9, p. 145; *HP* II, pp. 497–8. As soon as Richard resumed formal control of government in 1389, Castell was appointed to the peace commission for the first time.

been threatened by Richard's actions in 1386–7.¹⁷⁶ The decision to allow Richard to keep the throne meant that the Appellants' strategy had to be to attack those deemed to be responsible for misleading the king, men such as Burley, Tresilian, de Vere and de la Pole. The Appellants' rhetoric dwelt on Richard's youth and inexperience and the advantage taken of these by those closest to him.¹⁷⁷ Even those whose only real fault had been to choose to follow the king, such as Beauchamp of Holt, were not allowed to escape; the Appellants had to be seen to be consistent. But in the decisions taken in 1387–8 lay the seeds of the Appellants' eventual downfall. The Appellants may have been aware of the historical precedents set by Simon de Montfort and Thomas of Lancaster, which demonstrated that noble rebels could not hope to succeed against the king unless they deposed him.¹⁷⁸ However they chose to justify their actions, and however justified they themselves felt, the fact remained that they had taken up arms against the king, and had perhaps even considered deposing him. Their actions undermined the foundations of the medieval polity, which relied on obedience and loyalty to the king in return for the provision of good order and sound defence of the realm. Once the Appellants had rebelled against Richard, the bond of trust and co-operation with him was broken and could not be repaired while he remained on the throne. Richard would always regard them with suspicion and perhaps be out for revenge. The politics of 1386–8 would inform those of the 1390s.¹⁷⁹

The two results of the proceedings of the Merciless Parliament which affected the politics of the West Midlands were that the Appellants gained full control of central government and that there was an opportunity for some redistribution of lands following the fall of the king's friends. Warwick himself resumed some responsibilities at the centre. For example, he was appointed to the commission to be perpetually around the king, which was probably active until the Cambridge Parliament in September 1388. In July he was an adviser to Gloucester on negotiations with the duke of Burgundy.¹⁸⁰ After the summer, however, Warwick seems to have become less active in the central administration and he began to turn his attentions once more to his local affairs. This was the

¹⁷⁶ The role of the Commons was particularly crucial in the determination of Burley's fate: Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 174; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 125–6. Of course, there was a considerable body of Appellant support in this parliament.

¹⁷⁷ *RP* III, pp. 230–43. Article I makes it clear that all the other charges sprang from the fundamental misuse of the king's powers by those who had misled him.

¹⁷⁸ J. R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster, 1307–22* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 312–17; J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 282–6.

¹⁷⁹ Above, pp. 19–21.

¹⁸⁰ *CPR* 1385–9, p. 502; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, p. 462; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 196–200.

result of Richard's gradual resumption of power and influence during and after the Cambridge Parliament.¹⁸¹

Under the Appellants' rule, the lands of the king's friends which were not protected by entail or jointure were now forfeit and some of these were sold or leased to supporters of the Appellants.¹⁸² But, just as Richard II had not redrawn the political landscape in Worcestershire by his grants to Beauchamp of Holt, so the lands and offices that Beauchamp forfeited were also unlikely to alter radically the tenurial or political patterns in the area.¹⁸³ Beauchamp had hardly been granted large swathes of land in the county in the first place, and his entailed lands, including the FitzWyth inheritance, were protected from forfeiture. In addition, the lands that did become available in this way were auctioned or farmed out with extra guarantees against default of payment by the custodians in order to improve the royal finances; there was no opportunistic gold rush.¹⁸⁴

In 1388, Beauchamp of Holt forfeited custody of the alien priory of Astley, two-thirds of Kidderminster, one third of which was still held in reversion, both of which were in Worcestershire, and the custody of the Talbot of Richard's Castle inheritance in northern Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire.¹⁸⁵ In May 1388, custody of Astley was granted initially to two prominent Beauchamp men, John Hermesthorpe, the Beauchamp chamberlain of the exchequer, and Peter Holt, Warwick's own chamberlain. They were to pay 40 marks per annum, and entered into a recognisance for 50 marks against default of payment.¹⁸⁶ In July 1389, Warwick, with a group of his retainers, paid 1,200 marks for Astley and Kidderminster. Kidderminster was subsequently granted to Sir William Beauchamp.¹⁸⁷ Finally, Warwick and his esquire William Cokesey acquired custody of the Talbot inheritance for £43 6s 8d a year until the heir was of age. This particular arrangement was short-lived, however, as the young heir died just two months later in July 1388.¹⁸⁸

As Warwick was overlord of Beauchamp's manors of Holt (Worcestershire) and Shotteswell (Warwickshire), he was able to derive

¹⁸¹ Below, pp. 136–8.

¹⁸² Ross, 'Forfeitures for Treason', pp. 560, 562–4, 570–1; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 127–9.

¹⁸³ Above, pp. 103–6.

¹⁸⁴ Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 11, makes a similar point about the activities of the Appellant regime: 'There are various indications that ... more importance was attached to the principle of trying to maximise profit from crown assets, and less to the view that such assets were there to be distributed as rewards for political support.'

¹⁸⁵ *CIMisc* 1388–93, pp. 108–15; above, pp. 105–6. ¹⁸⁶ *CFR* 1383–91, p. 232.

¹⁸⁷ *CPR* 1388–92, p. 80; *VCH Wors.* III, pp. 160–1. From 1384, John Beauchamp had been granted custody of Astley free of farm, and, most unusually, had subsequently been allowed to acquire it in fee simple: *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 467, 536.

¹⁸⁸ *CFR* 1383–91, pp. 233, 254. Sir John Beauchamp had paid 40 marks per annum: *ibid.*, p. 41.

a more long-term benefit from their custody while Beauchamp's heir (another John) was a minor. Despite Warwick's influence at the centre, however, he faced challenges to his custody from the representatives of John Beauchamp II, perhaps encouraged by the sympathy of the king, who was the young heir's godfather.¹⁸⁹ This led to proceedings in chancery. As a result, Warwick did not succeed in getting custody of Holt until mid November 1388 and Shotteswell until February 1389.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, John Catesby, who had acquired an interest in Barnacle, a manor near Coventry, through his kinship to Beauchamp, also faced difficulties in winning the custody of this manor.¹⁹¹ Meanwhile, other members of the Beauchamp affinity also acquired leases of parcels of land forfeit in the region. Alexander Besford, for example, leased a mesuage in Worcester in February 1389.¹⁹² But all in all, the record of grants in the West Midlands suggests that, just as the Appellants' main aim was not to reverse the flow of patronage to them and their supporters, so their treatment of what forfeitures there were had more to do with an attempt to improve royal finances than with the redistribution of political power or personal gain. Rather than simply dividing up the spoils, the methods used in the West Midlands suggest an attempt to secure payments for the lands and to counter any possible problems caused by defaulters. Even if those who received first refusal on these grants tended to be men with links to the Appellants, it is noticeable that they still had to pay for the privilege; they did not receive them free of charge. The dominance of the Appellants over politics in early to mid 1388 did allow their supporters ready access to what pickings there were from forfeited lands, but, even when the king was under their tutelage, he still seems to have found means to express his will, as Warwick's and Catesby's experiences with the Beauchamp of Holt inheritance suggests.

Although Richard's formal resumption of power did not take place until 3 May 1389, it is clear that he had begun to regain control several months previously.¹⁹³ Richard's first opportunity for the reassertion of his power came in August 1388, with news of the disastrous and mortifying defeat of an army led by Henry Lord Percy by the Scots at Otterburn. Not only had the borders been breached once again, but Percy himself

¹⁸⁹ *HP* II, pp. 153–4.

¹⁹⁰ *CCR* 1385–9, pp. 541, 569, 627–8; *CIMisc* 1388–93, pp. 108–15.

¹⁹¹ Above, pp. 104–5. TNA KB 27/512, Rex, m. 1; KB 27/513, Rex, m. 6d.; *CFR* 1383–91, p. 270; *CCR* 1389–92, p. 12. Catesby finally won custody of Barnacle in July 1389.

¹⁹² This had been forfeited by Beauchamp. Besford was to pay 18 shillings per annum: *CPR* 1388–92, p. 12.

¹⁹³ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 131–8; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 200–4.

was captured.¹⁹⁴ This defeat did little to enhance the reputation of the Appellant regime, since their attack on Richard's advisers had been partly on the grounds of their failure to prosecute the war vigorously or successfully. Richard then seized a second chance to reassert his rule at the Cambridge Parliament in September 1388 by assuming the role of mediator between Lords and Commons during their debates over liveries and maintenance.¹⁹⁵

Thus, the proclamation of 1389 that he had taken power was the announcement of a *fait accompli* rather than an unexpected coup; Richard's grand statement may even have been inspired by a similar event in France in November 1388, when the young king Charles had thrown off the tutelage of *his* uncles.¹⁹⁶ The symbolism of this can hardly have been lost on Richard. He must also have been aware that many of his problems in the early 1380s had come about because there had been no defining moment at which his minority had ended.¹⁹⁷ His declaration that he was now of age removed this impediment for good and cleverly distanced him from the events of the 1380s, since he was able to claim that his youth and inexperience had allowed him to be misled. Because the Appellants had no real desire to keep power for themselves once their main objective – the removal of the circle closest to the king – had been achieved, they may even have encouraged him to take responsibility for governance once more.

The period between 1382 and 1386 was dominated by a struggle over control of government and Richard's attempts to implement his own ideas in the face of opposition by his uncles and the earl of Arundel. Meanwhile, continuing problems in defending the realm were exacerbated by growing disagreements over foreign policy and governmental inaction. In 1386, Richard's own ideas on governance collided with the complaints of his critics in parliament. The result was the crisis of 1387–8. Despite earlier tensions with the king, Warwick was a late recruit to the opposition to Richard. His eventual rebellion was brought about through a combination of disquiet over Richard's domestic and foreign policies and direct local aggression against him by the king.

By December 1388, however, the crisis appeared to be abating. Richard was resuming power: some men previously banished by the Appellants, such as Hugh Burnell, began to return to court, and the king's handling of the Commons and the Lords in the Cambridge Parliament suggested

¹⁹⁴ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 176; *Polychronicon* IX, p. 186; *Historia Vitae*, p. 119; *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 504–6; *Westminster Chronicle*, p. 347; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 132–3; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 198–9.

¹⁹⁵ Discussed below, pp. 146–9. ¹⁹⁶ Perroy, *Hundred Years War*, pp. 197–8.

¹⁹⁷ Above, pp. 81–2, 107–10.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

a new attitude towards his rule.¹⁹⁸ Richard's declaration of his intention to rule cannot have been a surprise, and may even have been a relief for the Appellants. Warwick and Gloucester were dismissed from the council, and Warwick returned to his estates.¹⁹⁹ But this withdrawal did not signal the end of Warwick's activities in local politics. Rather, during the next few years he was more active than he had ever been as new pressures on his local rule were applied by the king. In 1389, however, the Appellants may have hoped that their task was complete: the king appeared to have learnt his lesson, and he was no longer surrounded by those who might influence him to dangerous actions. Within two years, Richard was to begin to prove them very wrong.

¹⁹⁸ This also included clerks such as Richard Clifford, Nicholas Slake, John Lincoln and Richard Medford: *Polychronicon* IX, p. 116; *Historia Vitae*, p. 116; *Knighton's Chronicle*, p. 429; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 175–9; for Burnell, above, p. 121. The Cambridge Parliament is discussed below, pp. 146–9.

¹⁹⁹ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 182.

Chapter 4

1389–1397¹

Recently, it has become increasingly common to interpret the 1390s up to 1397 as the most successful period of Richard's rule, characterised by the cessation of war with France and a conciliatory attitude to domestic governance. In 1389, a series of Anglo-French truces came into force, culminating in 1396 in a twenty-eight-year truce and the marriage of Richard to the king of France's seven-year-old daughter.² The decreasing threat from France allowed Richard to alleviate some of the burden of taxation which had contributed to the parliamentary crises of 1376 and 1386.³ Richard's policy towards taxation formed part of a wider strategy in which he set out to win the support of the gentry whose opposition to his rule in 1387–8 had played such a vital part in the Appellants' success. Add to these changes the cordial relationship between Richard and Gaunt (who returned in late 1389), which was in direct contrast to their acrimonious power struggle in the early 1380s.⁴ When placed together with his apparent willingness to accept a measure of conciliar control over his power, particularly in his dispersal of grants of land and office, Richard's rule in the 1390s can certainly appear to lack the divisive tendencies responsible for the crisis of 1387–8.⁵ But if Richard's rule is interpreted as essentially harmonious, how can we explain the criticisms voiced in Haxey's petition in January 1397 or his coup against the former Appellants?

One school of thought used to explain the second crisis of the reign, and espoused by Tuck, is that Richard's foreign policy was the main cause of

¹ A version of Chapters 4 and 5 has appeared in an earlier article: A. K. Gundy, 'The Earl of Warwick and the Royal Affinity in the Politics of the West Midlands', in M. Hicks (ed.), *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 57–70.

² *Annales Ricardi Secundi*, p. 136; Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, pp. 166–78; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 178–9; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 225–34.

³ In 1389, Richard postponed collection of the second half of the subsidy granted in the previous year: Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 143–5; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 256–61.

⁴ Above, pp. 107–19.

⁵ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 139–43; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 251–6.

new tensions between the king, Arundel and Gloucester from c. 1393. The duke and the earl were particularly opposed to the terms to which Richard was prepared to agree, which involved the detachment of Aquitaine from the English crown and its settlement on Lancaster, together with the surrender of other strategically important fortresses.⁶ Another source of tension was that Richard continued to view France as a potential ally against his own subjects. In 1396, a draft treaty with France included a proposal that the French king should aid Richard against his own subjects. Even though this suggestion was not included in the eventual agreement, the very fact that Richard even contemplated it must have alarmed his noble opponents.⁷ Moreover, Richard's policy may have been aimed at reducing the crown's need for taxation, which had precipitated the crises of 1376 and 1386, but it was both ill-conceived and ill-received. In 1394, there was a rebellion in Aquitaine against the prospect of detachment from the English crown.⁸ Similarly, in 1393, there was a rising within the king's own power base in Cheshire, where the prospect of peace threatened the traditional regional reliance on war as a livelihood. Arundel, who was perfectly placed in his castle of Holt to quell the rebellion, did nothing.⁹ Although it is hard to believe that he was involved in the rebellion, his extraordinary inaction was a statement of his sympathy for the rebels' grievances and hostility to Gaunt. In the parliament of January 1394, Arundel launched an attack on Gaunt's part in the peace negotiations. Gaunt retaliated by accusing the earl of involvement in the Cheshire revolt, and the king intervened in support of his uncle, forcing Arundel to apologise.¹⁰ These events show without a doubt that Richard's peace policy was both controversial and divisive, but were they a symptom or the cause of the breakdown in relations between the king and the former Appellants?

Although Richard's foreign policy was undoubtedly the cause of serious friction between the king and his critics, the evidence points strongly to the conclusion that it was not the underlying source of political tension. It is noticeable that Arundel's criticism of Gaunt in 1394 was not aimed solely at his role in the peace negotiations and the benefits he strove to derive from them; he also complained about Lancaster's undue influence

⁶ Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, pp. 142–50; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 156–70, 178–9. The 1396 settlement included the surrender of Cherbourg and Brest: Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 227–8.

⁷ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 475–6; Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, pp. 166–8; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 178–9; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 228–9. Both Palmer and Saul play down the significance of this demand. Richard had also looked to France in 1386–7: above, pp. 131–2.

⁸ Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, pp. 152–63, argues that the Gascon revolt destroyed the secret final agreement between England and France.

⁹ J. G. Bellamy, 'The Northern Rebellions in the Later Years of Richard II', *BJRL*, 47 (1964), pp. 262–70; Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism*, pp. 162–91.

¹⁰ *RP* III, pp. 313–14.

over the king and his overbearing behaviour in council which made any form of dissent impossible.¹¹ In April 1394, Arundel's sense of unease led him to take out a general pardon. In the summer of that year, the earl clashed once more with the king at the queen's funeral and was imprisoned in the Tower of London.¹² Clearly, Arundel's alienation from the king and Lancaster went beyond his opposition to peace. Furthermore, it is not obvious that Gloucester's fall from grace was linked to Richard's foreign policy, since Gloucester was so involved in the negotiations that he was identified by the Cheshire rebels as one of the main architects of the policy. In fact, Tuck's argument is drawn entirely from French chronicle sources, whose writers were searching for a way to account for Gloucester's fall in 1397. Significantly, no English chronicler cites the peace negotiations as a source of serious friction. Even if Gloucester's attitude was ambivalent, it is hard to accept the explanation offered by the French chroniclers that it was solely his dislike of the 1396 truce that turned him against the king.¹³ Tuck depicts the gradual deterioration in relations between the king and the former Appellants as the result of new disagreements because he cannot find any consistency between Richard's rule before 1388 and his policies in the 1390s. But this is only because there is no sign of the system of patronage which Tuck cited as the main cause of the crisis of 1386–8.¹⁴ As we have seen, Richard's rule should not be viewed only in terms of his distribution of patronage; his policies need to be interpreted in the wider context of his attitude towards kingship, his nobility, law and property. It is in this context that the draft treaty with France in 1396 may be significant, for it implied that Richard was prepared to rely on England's old enemy against his own subjects, as he had already suggested in 1386 in the Wonderful Parliament.¹⁵ Is it possible that the unease voiced by Arundel and Gloucester was the result of a persistent and consistent policy in domestic rule on the part of the king which threatened his landed subjects?

If Tuck emphasises the role of foreign policy as a source of the deteriorating political conditions of the 1390s, he does see domestic politics after

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 215; CPR 1391–6, p. 436; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 169. The text of the pardon states that it was for all treasons and insurrections with the commons, which could be a reference to Arundel's activities in 1386–8 or the rebellion of 1393, or both.

¹³ J. Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. T. Johnes (2 vols., London, 1862), II, pp. 586–7, 610. Tuck is particularly reliant on Froissart, who says that Gloucester was grudgingly in favour of the peace talks until 1394, because the settlement of Aquitaine on Gaunt would have led to Lancaster's removal from English politics: Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 160–2. Bellamy argues that Gloucester was intriguing against Gaunt following disagreements over the peace negotiations, but his interpretation is based on the work of John Créton: Bellamy, 'Northern Rebellions', pp. 264–7, 272–4.

¹⁴ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 137–40; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 235–6, although the latter argues that there was some consistency in Richard's views of kingship. For a discussion of this problem: above, pp. 9–10, 23–5.

¹⁵ Above, pp. 131–2.

1389 as a fragile settlement which began to break down after 1393. There is plenty of evidence to support the view that conditions began to deteriorate from this time, in the Cheshire revolt, in Arundel's attack on Lancaster and in his imprisonment by the king. Further unease was generated by the crown's financial difficulties, which were exacerbated by Richard's spending on his retinue.¹⁶ The king's need for money, which encouraged a peace policy, played a part in the Cheshire rebellion and was also at least partly behind his dispute with London in 1392, during which he removed the central courts to York.¹⁷ By early 1397, the disquiet could be suppressed no longer and found voice in Haxey's petition, which attacked the extravagance of the royal household. As in 1386, Richard reacted angrily to this criticism. Haxey only avoided a traitor's death because he was a cleric. As in the Questions to the Judges of 1387, the definition of treason had been expanded to encompass criticism of the king.¹⁸

However, despite the evidence that the 1390s was a period of growing political tension over domestic as well as foreign policy, the most recent interpretations have emphasised the successful and harmonious nature of Richard's rule throughout the period until 1397.¹⁹ It is argued that his first strategy was to win the support of the parliamentary Commons by passing legislation as a response to their petitions complaining about the abuses of retaining. He did this by implementing judicial reform which focused on the peace commissions. This failed, through a combination of noble opposition and the impossibility of ruling the localities without the support of the magnates' landed influence. Thereafter, Richard turned to the formation of his own magnate-style affinity.²⁰

There are, however, serious interpretational problems with this line of argument, not least that, unlike the interpretation which focuses on foreign policy, it provides no explanation at all for the events of 1397.²¹ Further, it has already been shown that medieval kings' successes were not reliant on their ability to purchase their subjects' support, while the

¹⁶ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 466–70; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 137–56, esp. pp. 152, 156. For Richard's financial problems see Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 111–14, 135–40, who argues that Richard's spending began to increase in 1392–3, but did not cause difficulties until 1395.

¹⁷ C. M. Barron, 'The Quarrel of Richard II with London, 1392–7', in du Boulay and Barron (eds.), *Reign of Richard II*, pp. 173–201, esp. pp. 176–9, 189.

¹⁸ *RP* III, pp. 339, 341; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 181–3; A. K. McHardy, 'Haxey's Case 1397: The Petition and its Presenter Reconsidered', in J. L. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 71–92; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 368–70; above, pp. 123–9.

¹⁹ Given-Wilson, 'King and the Gentry', pp. 82–102, esp. p. 95: Richard's policies produced the 'most harmonious years of the reign'. Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 235–6.

²⁰ Storey, 'Commissions of the Peace'; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 145–62; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 214–17; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 262–9.

²¹ See for example Saul's psychological explanation for Richard's actions in 1397: Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 201–3, 367–8; above, pp. 139–41.

revisionist version of Richard's rule relies on the assumption that the extension of royal authority into the localities through the royal affinity was a force for firmer royal rule and improved local order.²² This assumption has militated against detailed research into the actual impact and function of Richard's policies towards the localities, despite work on the royal affinity under the Lancastrians which has suggested that it was often a disruptive element in local society.²³

Any discussion of Richard's policy towards the localities in the 1390s must begin with an analysis of the extent to which he was able to act from his own knowledge and experience of local politics and the extent to which he had to rely on advice from those resident in the localities who had the most to gain from a redistribution of political power.²⁴ There is considerable evidence that Richard was undoubtedly in sole charge of executive power from 1389, and that he did take an interest in local affairs. His proclamation of 1389 made it clear that he intended to take the government of the realm into his own hands.²⁵ Subsequently, Richard's policies seem to have been designed to alter the balance of power in the localities on a national scale, although it must be said that there has been no complete overview of this aspect of this rule to confirm this.²⁶ It is necessary, therefore, to rely on individual case studies, which are beginning to reveal a pattern in Richard's policies. For example, Tuck has shown that Richard's actions concerning the Northern Marcher families of Neville and Percy alienated them both. Meanwhile, the work of Cherry and Tyldesley on the earl of Devon has revealed that the latter was under threat from the intrusion of another royally backed magnate, the earl of Huntingdon. Similarly, Walker has argued that in the later years of the reign, even John of Gaunt felt threatened by Richard's retaining policy.²⁷ Most significantly for the interpretation of the reign as a whole, Mitchell has shown that Richard intruded royal power directly into the localities by ensuring the nomination of household knights to the key positions of sheriff and JP, especially in regions where the former Appellants were influential.²⁸

²² Above, pp. 14–15, 21–3. ²³ Above, pp. 22–3.

²⁴ I am grateful to Dr J. Watts for raising this important point.

²⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, pp. 391–3; above, pp. 136–7.

²⁶ Although Mitchell's recent study has come close to this: Mitchell, 'Knightly Household of Richard II', esp. pp. 200–32.

²⁷ J. A. Tuck, 'Richard II and the Border Magnates', *Northern History*, 3 (1968), pp. 27, 44–5, 48–52. Tuck argues that Richard's policy really took effect in 1398, but was visible as early as 1389. Tyldesley, 'Crown and Local Communities', pp. 157–80; Cherry, 'Courtenay Earls of Devon', pp. 89–92; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 33–4, 174–9; Arundel also appears to have been experiencing something similar in the Marches and Shropshire: King, 'Richard II, Shropshire and the Northern March', pp. 66–83.

²⁸ Mitchell, 'Knightly Household of Richard II', pp. 112–24, 130–1, 170–99.

There is evidence, therefore, that a consistent royal policy was applied throughout the realm, although its operation and effects varied from region to region. This consistency suggests that the policy had a single central source, the king himself. Even if Richard was not the architect of the finer details of the policy, such important grants of land, office and title which changed the power structures of the localities would only have been possible with royal agreement. But even if the responsibility for the overall policy towards local rule in the 1390s was Richard's, to what extent could he be expected to influence or appreciate the minutiae of day-to-day politics in a particular locality? After all, although the king had vast powers in theory, in practice he was not omniscient, and could not be expected to know every detail concerning the governance or the personnel of the shires. For information, he had to rely on those resident in the shires who had detailed knowledge of local conditions.²⁹ In the West Midlands this would have been part of Warwick's duties, but, as we shall see, in the 1390s he was frozen out of local politics, and replaced with Lancaster, Mowbray, Despenser and gentry members of the royal affinity, such as William Bagot.³⁰ It could be argued, therefore, that it was the personal ambitions of these men, who petitioned the king for the grants of land and office which would enhance their local power, which drove the king's policy. Nevertheless, there are powerful reasons for rejecting this line of argument.

First of all, although the act of petitioning the king provided a mechanism for alerting him to the availability of a particular grant and of the presence of interested parties, it has been assumed too readily that a request would automatically meet with success. Crucially, the decision concerning the direction of a particular grant which could alter the whole balance of power in the region lay with the king. Obviously, with smaller or less politically significant grants there would be an element of rubber-stamping, but Richard could intervene when he wished. It seems that the situation under Richard was the exact opposite of that found under Henry VI. The latter's rule was characterised by a complete lack of will which left government rudderless, while the former was too wilful.³¹ The consistent direction of individual grants in the 1390s makes it clear

²⁹ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 347–54; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 356–65; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 76–80, 96–7.

³⁰ Below, pp. 152–9.

³¹ Tuck, 'Richard II's System of Patronage', pp. 4–5, 19–20. For the view that the king was at the mercy of his subjects see J. R. Lander, *The Limitations of the English Monarchy in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1989), p. 14, who comments that kings found it 'difficult to maintain and defend its [the crown's] endowment in a highly acquisitive society in which voracious seekers after patronage were often hardly distinguishable from predators'. In contrast, Watts comments that 'the personal will of the king was ultimately necessary for the operation of local as well as national government'; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 100, 102–11.

that he took a personal interest in their destination. For example, in 1398 John Russell was granted the marriage of Elizabeth, the widow of John Clinton. Russell may have advised the king that such a grant would be sensible, considering the political conditions of the time, although he also stood to gain financially and politically from it. But the decision was Richard's to make and he decided in favour of Russell because political necessity dictated it, and because it fitted into his wider policy of increasing the local power of his affinity.³² Similarly, in 1396–7, when Mowbray sued Warwick for the return of Gower, he could not have done so without the implicit backing of the king. When part of Warwick's inheritance was detached and granted to Mowbray's feoffees in June 1397, Mowbray may have suggested which manors fitted best with his current holdings in the region, but the settlement was only implemented because it was backed by the king's will.³³

There is other evidence that the royal policy towards the rule of the localities was Richard's own and not thrust upon him from below by self-seeking advisers. First, Richard's peripatetic style of kingship has often been remarked upon. In the 1390s, he travelled widely throughout his kingdom and often passed through or stayed in the midlands. In July 1390 he visited Gloucester, Leicester and Nottingham; in August 1394 he passed through Gloucester on his way to Ireland; in January 1396 he was again in the region, visiting Gloucester, Worcester, Warwick and Coventry; in 1397–9 his presence in the region became more permanent.³⁴ Thus, in his travels, Richard would have had the opportunity to acquaint himself with local conditions, and to resolve any local difficulties in his exercise of royal power. He also seems to have taken an active interest in appointments to local government. In November 1389, he and his privy council allegedly appointed the sheriffs, and the evidence from the West Midlands strongly suggests that this was not the only occasion on which he asserted his own preferences.³⁵ In the 1390s, appointments to the shrievalty and peace commissions and elections to parliament bear the hallmark of Richard's policy. A particularly striking example of this is the return of William Bagot, Richard's man, as MP for Warwickshire to every parliament between 1390 and 1397, despite his violent reputation.³⁶ Again, Richard could not be expected to know personally all the officers and would have relied on the advice of those who did, but the trend is too consistent to suggest that these appointments were either entirely

³² Below, pp. 210. ³³ Below, pp. 187, 197.

³⁴ Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 471–4; M. J. Bennett, 'Richard II and the Wider Realm', in Goodman and Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, pp. 187–8, 193–7.

³⁵ Storey, 'Commissions of the Peace', pp. 141–2.

³⁶ *HP* II, pp. 99–103.

random or the result of purely local pressure. Finally, there were also occasions when Richard chose to exert his power in order to achieve a particular local objective. For example, in the Lylling–Russell dispute, which will be discussed in the context of Richard’s policy towards local order, the men accused of murder appeared most unusually in King’s Bench in York, when Richard had moved the court there.³⁷ This suggests that pressure had been exerted by the king himself, who had taken a very personal interest in the affair.

What exactly were Richard’s policies, and how did they affect Warwick’s rule of the West Midlands? The best-known aspect of Richard’s rule in the 1390s is certainly his attempt to appeal to the gentry. Although it is undeniable that his aim was to create a power base for himself, the aims, nature and impact of his policy have been somewhat misinterpreted. Since this is a subject that is crucial to an understanding of the politics of the West Midlands in the period, it will be given detailed consideration here. Richard’s policy had several different facets, including the reduction of taxation and the re-enactment of the Statute of Labourers at the Cambridge Parliament.³⁸ Regarding local politics, however, the most significant aspect of this policy was Richard’s portrayal of himself as the champion of law and order and his recruitment of a royal affinity.

The most influential interpretation of Richard’s policy towards law and order remains Storey’s work.³⁹ He argued that the parliamentary Commons had become increasingly disillusioned with the abuses of the judicial system which were brought about by the practice of retaining, in particular the giving of badges. The Lords in parliament, meanwhile, had consistently refused to countenance reform because it was their interests that would suffer. By 1388, the impasse had led to a crisis of order locally, which was exacerbated by the rule of the king’s noble opponents, who saw no need for reform. Even before his official resumption of power, Richard had already seized his opportunity to detach the Commons from the Lords in the Cambridge Parliament (1388). The Commons complained about livery and maintenance and demanded that all liveries be abolished. The Lords refused, and Richard stepped into the breach by offering to give up his own livery. To this, the Lords would not agree. Eventually, Richard proposed a compromise: the issue was to be considered by the king and council.⁴⁰ Shortly after his official resumption

³⁷ Below, pp. 174–5.

³⁸ J. A. Tuck, ‘The Cambridge Parliament, 1388’, *EHR*, 84 (1969), pp. 226, 237–8; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 143–5; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 256–61.

³⁹ Storey, ‘Commissions of the Peace’. Most historians have followed his interpretation, for example Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 145–50; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 263–9.

⁴⁰ There is no surviving roll from this parliament, but, luckily, an account of the proceedings appears in the *Westminster Chronicle*, pp. 355–69.

of power in May 1389, at which he proclaimed his intention to uphold the common law, Richard began his campaign in earnest. His chosen method was a series of radical changes to the peace commissions. In July 1389, new commissions were issued which completely omitted both the nobles and their stewards; in November, determining powers, lost in 1382, were restored.⁴¹ In the parliament of January 1390 the Commons renewed their complaints. The king's response was to broker a compromise in an ordinance issued by the great council, which forbade the giving of livery of company to any man other than life retainers and servants of the household and restricted the grant of livery to the lay nobility. By November 1390, however, Storey argues, Richard's policy had broken down, and he had begun the systematic recruitment of his own affinity instead. In the same month, at the request of the Commons, the nobility were restored to the peace commissions. It seems that the Commons had found that the county benches could not be effective without the backing of the nobility's landed power. Although Tuck agrees with the essence of Storey's interpretation, he suggests that the king continued his reforms through the channels of the civil law until 1392, only then turning in earnest to a policy of retaining.⁴² Nevertheless, both Tuck and Storey agree that the king's policy was 'defeated' by a combination of the lords' unwillingness to co-operate and the contemporary system of local governance, of which the nobility were an integral part.⁴³

In the light of more recent work on the role of the judicial system in medieval society, considerable reassessment of Richard's policy towards the gentry and local order is now needed. First of all, Storey's interpretation of the role of the peace commissions from 1389 to 1390 was based on the Putnam paradigm, which assumed that the JPs were already a political force as a result of the capitulation of royal judicial power to the gentry. In fact, as the evidence of 1369–89 shows, the peace commissions

⁴¹ Storey, 'Commissions of the Peace', p. 140. For the West Midlands commissions issued in July and November 1389: *CPR 1388–92*, pp. 136–7, 138–9. The commissions for Warwickshire were: 15 July 1389: George Castell, John Mallory, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey, Thomas Raleigh, Richard Sydenham (assize justice), William Thirnyng (assize justice); 10 November 1389: William Bagot, Robert Burgulon, George Castell, John Mallory, William Purfrey, Thomas Raleigh, Richard Sydenham, William Thirnyng. The Worcestershire commissions were: 15 July 1389: John Cassy (assize justice, chief baron of the exchequer), Robert Cherlton (assize justice), Walter Cokesey, John Hull (assize justice), Robert Russell, Ralph Stafford, William Wasteneys, John atte Wode; 10 November 1389: John Aleyn, Henry Bruyn, John Cassy, Robert Cherlton, Walter Cokesey, John Hull, Robert Russell, John atte Wode. Warwick's chief steward, Nicholas Lyllyng, was omitted from both benches. For the loss of determining powers and the effect on the JPs: above, pp. 110–12.

⁴² Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 148–50.

⁴³ See Tuck's comment concerning the case of *Esturmy v. Courtenay* that 'the nobility were the real victors ... Their resistance to the effective measures against lawlessness ... did much to bring about the collapse of Richard's policy of law enforcement': Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 149; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 262–6; below, pp. 166–7.

were still fluctuating in form and importance.⁴⁴ The changes Richard initiated in 1389 were part of these fluctuations, nor did they end in November 1390 with the return of the nobility. In November 1389, a double quorum was introduced, which lasted until 1394, when it was replaced by a single quorum comprising both assize justices and lawyers. As Walker has shown, the result of these changes was to extend, not restrict, royal control over local justice.⁴⁵ In the light of Richard's attitude towards local rule, his experimentation with the peace commissions has extra significance. It seems that Richard, or someone close to him, was the first person to realise the full political potential of the JPs, who, with their powers of determination restored, had the ability to make significant interventions in local disputes. The complete removal of the nobility in July 1389 was an early experiment by Richard in his search for a successful formula that would enhance his control over local justice. During the 1390s, Richard continued to adjust the composition of the peace commissions to suit his purposes. As the evidence from Worcestershire will show, the reshaping of the county bench was to form a vital part of Richard's policy, which, in turn, was intimately bound up with his wider attitude towards law and order.⁴⁶

A second part of Storey's argument which now needs reassessment is his assumption that the Commons' petitions represented a crisis in local order which in turn led to a rift between the gentry and nobility. This argument can be linked to Saul's suggestion that there were 'independent' gentry who lived 'outside' bastard feudalism but who were nevertheless able to ensure that they were elected to parliament, where they aired their grievances against noble abuses.⁴⁷ However, the work of Carpenter, Powell and Maddern has shown that parliamentary petitions complaining about abuses of the judicial system cannot be taken entirely at face value.⁴⁸ Whilst manipulation of the legal system undoubtedly existed, the parliamentary petitions which complained about liveries and maintenance were delivered by the very members of society who were the main culprits and beneficiaries of such practices. Should the rift between Lords and Commons which these petitions appear to represent be taken at face value, therefore? As noted earlier, Carpenter has argued that the link between nobility and gentry was integral to the functioning of governance in the localities, including the maintenance of law and order,

⁴⁴ Walker, 'Yorkshire Justices of the Peace', pp. 281–3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 289–98, 305–11. ⁴⁶ Below, pp. 173–6, 180–1.

⁴⁷ Storey, 'Commissions of the Peace', p. 139: 'the debate on liveries had revealed [the Commons'] entire lack of confidence in the lords as champions of law and order'; Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, pp. 101–2.

⁴⁸ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 16–20; Maddern, *Violence and Social Order*, chs. 1 and 2; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 355–61; above, pp. 19–21.

and that MPs were at least as much bound up in this system as any other landowners. It should not be assumed, therefore, that the relationship between nobility and gentry was naturally antagonistic. Rather, she suggests that the Commons' petitions stemmed from an inherent ambiguity in their attitudes towards the law. On the one hand they expected the king to provide an immutable guarantee that the law would protect their property, the basis of their power. On the other hand, since local government relied on the private power conferred by land, they also needed to be able to bend the law when it suited them, although within accepted limits. Thus, they feared too much royal interference in the localities. As Saul has pointed out, the complaints about abuses of livery were not aimed at the institution of retaining in itself, but rather at its most unacceptable and disruptive face, the giving of badges to 'rent-a-mobs'. These ideas were expressed through parliamentary rhetoric, especially when the Commons were being subjected to heavy taxation, as a *quid pro quo*.⁴⁹ In the light of these arguments, the Commons' petitions in 1388 and 1390 should not be read as a reaction to a crisis in local order caused by magnate misrule. In the West Midlands at least, there is no evidence to suggest that Warwick's rule had exceeded the accepted boundaries of local rule. In fact, as we shall see, what disorder there was in the region in the 1390s was caused by the intrusion of the king's affinity, and Warwick's reaction to it, not by the earl's inability to rule the West Midlands *per se*.⁵⁰ What was different in 1388–90 was that the king himself decided to act on the Commons' complaints with a programme of reform, which, as Carpenter has pointed out, was not necessarily what the Commons wanted.⁵¹ It is possible that Richard, like his historians, actually believed that some of his nobility could not be trusted to rule the localities, but, like his historians, he was mistaken.

We should now examine the second part of Richard's policy of appealing to the gentry, his attempt to create a royal affinity. As we have seen, historical writing on Richard's novel idea has tended to be placed within a framework which depicts the nobility as a potential threat to the monarchy and the gentry as the emerging political power of the

⁴⁹ Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners', pp. 211–16, 225–31; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', p. 359–61. N. Saul, 'The Commons and the Abolition of Badges', *Parliamentary History*, 9 (1990), 302–15. Discussed above, pp. 19–21.

⁵⁰ Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners', pp. 229–31; note also her suggestion that the 1390 parliament may have been packed with crown supporters. Storey in particular has argued that the magnate opponents of Richard were not interested in maintaining law and order, which led to increasing problems in the localities from 1386. He cites disturbances in Leicestershire to support this theory, but this may not be a particularly good example, since the dominant lord in the county, Gaunt, was absent. Thus, although Storey may be right in thinking that the period 1386–8 was more disturbed, the reasons were far more complex than simple magnate misrule.

⁵¹ Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners', pp. 229–31.

late fourteenth century. In this context, Richard's affinity is often seen as a method of harnessing the growing influence and independence of the gentry. But since it has already been shown that neither this mutual antagonism, nor the power of the gentry, can be assumed, the role of the royal affinity within local politics also needs to be reconsidered.⁵²

That Richard was attempting to build up his own power base in the localities is without question; he had, it seems, already tried a similar policy in the 1380s by enhancing his friends' power in Wales and the Marches.⁵³ From 1390, Richard decided on a different means of interpolating royal power into existing political structures. As soon as the personnel of Richard's affinity is analysed, however, it becomes clear that his recruitment policy was not aimed solely at the gentry, but also at the nobility. Unlike his historians, Richard II recognised that he needed the nobility to rule the localities. The landed power of magnates such as the Holland brothers, Thomas Mowbray and Gaunt formed an integral part of Richard's rule. In an attempt to bind these men more closely to him, Richard included them in his retaining policy.⁵⁴ He seems to have aimed to retain mostly the younger members of his nobility, possibly because they were of a similar age to him and also because they had been mostly too young to take an active part in the events of 1386–8. The emergence in the 1390s of several younger magnates such as Thomas earl of Stafford, Thomas Mowbray, Roger Mortimer earl of March and Thomas Despenser presented Richard with a good opportunity to exercise this policy.⁵⁵

Richard's use of his noble retainers was unprecedented. They were not employed by the king to serve in his household or on the battlefield. They were retained in order to bind them to the king and provide him with a group of men on whom he believed he could rely to rule the localities according to his wishes. Also, by creating close links with some of his magnates, Richard was able to employ their affinities in local government at the expense of Warwick and his affinity. In other words, by retaining members of the nobility, Richard also acquired by proxy their already established affinities.⁵⁶ This enabled him to circumvent some of

⁵² Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, pp. 79–82; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 214–17, 264–7; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 265–9, although the latter also emphasises the part played by Richard's noble friends; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 239–48. The whole problem of the rule of the late medieval shires and whether and to what extent royal power had been devolved to the localities and the implications for interpretations of local history is discussed above, pp. 27–8.

⁵³ Above, pp. 99, 107.

⁵⁴ Tuck implies that some members of the nobility were part of the royal affinity; the argument proposed here strengthens his point: Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 180–1.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the potential landed power of these members of the nobility in the West Midlands, above, pp. 51–2, 57–8.

⁵⁶ Discussed below, pp. 155–6.

the shortcomings of his own affinity. A royal affinity on a national scale would always be restricted by cost, by the nature of local government and by the landed basis on which local power rested. The numbers of gentry that Richard did retain meant that the royal finances spiralled out of control and even the hundreds of men who were members of the royal affinity itself were not enough on their own to provide complete control over every region.⁵⁷ Given-Wilson has shown that in some areas Richard was able to draw a whole circle of gentry into his affinity, but in others, such as Devon and Worcestershire, royal retainers were sparse.⁵⁸ Even if the king did succeed in retaining a significant proportion of the gentry from one locality, it did not follow that it was they who had the most influence in local politics. Although Richard retained prominent knights such as Sir William Bagot and Sir John Russell, they were outnumbered by Beauchamp men through whom Warwick could exert a wider and more immediate influence. By retaining magnates with their substantial landed estates in the region, however, Richard could use both them and their affinities to outnumber and outmanoeuvre Warwick and his affinity. When reference is made to the royal affinity, therefore, this should include implicitly the noble as well as the gentry members.

In November 1389 the new earl of Stafford, who was nearly of age, was retained for life by the king. He was granted livery of his lands and remission of the sum of 1,000 marks, one third of the payment he owed for his marriage.⁵⁹ The Stafford lands in Warwickshire had been in the custody of Warwick and other nobles and Richard may therefore have decided to remove Warwick's additional landed influence even before Stafford was of age. The retaining of Stafford was also significant in the context of the good relations enjoyed by Warwick and the previous Stafford earl. It is possible that the king was trying to prevent Warwick from forming an alliance with his young nephew similar to that with Stafford's father in the 1370s and 1380s.⁶⁰ In Stafford's case, however, Richard's plans were confounded when the earl died in 1392, to be succeeded by a succession of minors. This was not completely to Richard's disadvantage, however, since it allowed Lancaster to extend his influence into Staffordshire and Warwickshire in the Staffords' place, at a time when he was still on good terms with the king.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 40–1, 79.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 217–21, 282–6; the Oxfordshire–Berkshire grouping appears to have been particularly strong.

⁵⁹ *CPR* 1388–92, p. 160. Stafford came of age the following year: *CCR* 1389–92, pp. 231–2.

⁶⁰ Above, pp. 56–7.

⁶¹ *CIPM* 1391–9, pp. 88–109; Rawcliffe, *Earls of Stafford*, pp. 11–12; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 212–14, 222–7. For Gaunt's good relations with Richard: below, pp. 154–5.

In February 1394 Roger Mortimer earl of March was also retained by the king and granted full livery of his lands, although he, like Stafford, was still technically a minor.⁶² Richard's eagerness to give Mortimer control of his inheritance stemmed not just from his policies in the localities but also in part from his desire to mount an expedition to Ireland, in which the earl, as the leading Anglo-Irish magnate, would be particularly useful. This time, Richard faced considerable opposition from the custodians of Mortimer's lands, of whom Warwick was again one. They complained that, as the legal guardians of the lands, they should not be ousted against their will. They also feared that the Mortimer inheritance would be dissipated.⁶³ Warwick may also have been worried that, having lost the custody of the Stafford inheritance, he was losing the Mortimer lands before it was necessary, particularly since Mortimer appeared to be forming close links to the king. But, as in the case of Stafford, the king's policy towards Mortimer was only partly successful. Mortimer was kept busy in Ireland and made only brief visits to England between 1395 and his death in 1398. As a result, his affinity did not impinge at all on the politics of Worcestershire, despite his lands in the north-west of the county.⁶⁴

Richard also directed his retaining fees at members of the West Midlands baronage. In 1388 Hugh Lord Burnell, the heir to the Botetourt inheritance, had been amongst the men expelled from court by the Appellants.⁶⁵ Despite this, he remained connected to the king, for in 1393 he was granted 6d a day for life for his labours on the king's behalf.⁶⁶ Burnell seems to have become increasingly alienated from the royal affinity after 1395, however, possibly because he had formed a connection to the Lancastrian affinity, and Gaunt's relationship with Richard was deteriorating from this time. Between 1394 and 1398, Burnell's son and heir Edward was retained by Gaunt, and although he died prematurely, his father's links with the Lancastrians continued to the extent that he supported Bolingbroke's usurpation.⁶⁷

Richard's relationship with Thomas Despenser was more fruitful, however. In May 1393 Despenser, still a minor, was granted £100 per annum from his estates, which he was to hold in addition to the £100 he had already been granted for his maintenance. In March 1394, although he was still not yet of age, he was granted livery of his lands.⁶⁸ As in Mortimer's

⁶² CPR 1391–6, p. 375.

⁶³ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 171–2; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 276–7; for the Mortimers' Irish inheritance, above, pp. 51–2.

⁶⁴ Below, pp. 162–4. ⁶⁵ Above, pp. 121, 137. ⁶⁶ CPR 1391–6, p. 269.

⁶⁷ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 203, 266. Hugh Burnell was one of the lords present in the Tower to receive Richard's renunciation of the crown in 1399: *RP* III, p. 416. It is noticeable that, after 1395, Burnell ceased to be appointed to local commissions until Bolingbroke's accession.

⁶⁸ CPR 1391–6, pp. 271, 384, 386, 427. He also accompanied Richard to Ireland in 1394: *ibid.*, p. 483.

case, this seems to have been connected to Despenser's involvement in the planned Irish campaign. Richard's use of Despenser and his affinity was not purely military, however. His men were also appointed to local office in Worcestershire. These included two men who had previously been linked to Warwick, Richard Ruyhall II and Thomas Brugge.⁶⁹ Whilst Despenser's landed estates in Worcestershire remained confined to the south-west of the county, however, his influence would remain limited.⁷⁰

In Warwickshire, a similar process was occurring. From 1389, Thomas Mowbray began to establish himself in Warwickshire, having been declared of age and granted livery of his lands in that year. As early as 1382, Mowbray had been retained by the king and was granted livery of his lands and his own marriage, provided that he married according to an agreement already made. Unfortunately for Mowbray, his marriage fell through, and his lands were seized back until he petitioned for them in 1389. Subsequently, however, the king seems to have been prepared to forgive Mowbray his role in the 1387 appeal, and directed politically and militarily important grants to him, such as making him Captain of Calais (1391) and Justice of North Wales (1394).⁷¹

Although Mowbray never achieved possession of his full inheritance, he did inherit lands in eastern Warwickshire such as Monk's Kirby and Withybrook, which fitted neatly with his estates just over the border in Leicestershire.⁷² As with Gaunt in the 1370s, Mowbray's Leicestershire estates meant that he had the ability to influence the affairs of Warwickshire through the joint shrievalty and escheatorship of Warwickshire and Leicestershire.⁷³ Indeed, several members of Mowbray's affinity already had cross-border links, including Hugh and Robert Dalby of Brookhampton,⁷⁴ and Thomas and Edward Clinton (the younger sons of John Lord Clinton of Maxstoke).⁷⁵ Mowbray was also closely associated with John Peyto II of Chesterton, who acted as his deputy in the court marshal.⁷⁶ Mowbray's influence was probably

⁶⁹ Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, pp. 287, 289; below, pp. 162–3, 173.

⁷⁰ Above, p. 52.

⁷¹ Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 63–75; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 285.

⁷² Above, pp. 57–8. The Brotherton and Segrave lands remained in the hands of his grandmother until her death in 1399, six months before Mowbray's own: Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 27–32.

⁷³ Above, pp. 68–9.

⁷⁴ Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 283, 339. The Dalbys were tenants of the Mowbrays at Brookhampton (Warwks.): *VCH Warwks.* v, p. 106. The Dalbys' toponymic surname suggests that they may have had a connection with Dalby (Leics.), which was part of the Segrave inheritance: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 36, 323–6.

⁷⁵ Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 283, 339; Thomas Clinton had married into the Leicestershire family of Meignell: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', p. 341.

⁷⁶ Peyto was acting as Mowbray's deputy by November 1389, and continued to do so until at least 1392: *CPR 1388–92*, p. 131; *CPR 1391–6*, pp. 42–3.

also behind the introduction of Robert Goushill to Warwickshire society. Goushill was a native of Nottinghamshire, but in c. 1395 he married the widow of Sir Ralph Bracebrugge, whose patrimony lay in Warwickshire and Lincolnshire.⁷⁷ It may have been Bracebrugge's connection with Lincolnshire, where Mowbray's landed interests were strong, that brought Goushill into contact with this wealthy widow.⁷⁸ A further link between Mowbray, Goushill and Bracebrugge was the ubiquitous William Bagot, whose daughter had married Bracebrugge's son.⁷⁹ Bagot had been connected with the Mowbrays since the 1380s, but, whilst there were minorities in the Mowbray family, it is doubtful that this link was particularly strong. As Mowbray began to emerge as a political force in the late 1380s, however, the association became stronger. Bagot may have owed his first election as MP in 1388 in part to his connection with Mowbray, and in the 1390s he retained his links with him and his affinity. It may be that it was through Bagot that his associate, William Ilshawe of Tanworth, was introduced to the Mowbray affinity.⁸⁰

But the most important figure in central and local politics in the period was undoubtedly John of Gaunt, who returned from Castile in November 1389. In stark contrast to the plots and mutual suspicion which had characterised their relationship in the 1380s, Richard and Lancaster now worked closely together, following a very public reconciliation. Gaunt was the leading figure in the English negotiations for a permanent peace with France and a major beneficiary of them, whilst his landed power provided a valuable prop for the Ricardian regime.⁸¹ His determination to protect royal power meant that, while he was alive, opposition to the king would be muted, if not completely silenced. The close co-operation between the duke and the king was reflected in the accusations made by Arundel in 1394, when the earl complained of the duke's undue influence over the king. Richard himself sported a Lancastrian collar as a symbol of his relationship with his uncle.⁸² Despite Richard's adoption of Gaunt's livery, however, it was the king who was ultimately in charge of policy, and it

⁷⁷ Archer, 'Mowbrays', p. 280. Bracebrugge had died by mid 1395 and his widow had married Goushill by late 1399. Since Goushill was appointed sheriff in late 1396, it seems probable that the marriage had taken place by then: *CIPM* 1391–9, p. 237; *CIPM* 1399–1405, p. 103. The Bracebrugge inheritance in Warwickshire included the manors of Kingsbury and Plumpton: *CCR* 1392–6, p. 466.

⁷⁸ Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 1–4. ⁷⁹ *HP* IV, pp. 446–7.

⁸⁰ *HP* II, pp. 99–103; III, pp. 474–5; Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 339, 342. Ilshawe was active in the land market around Tanworth in the mid 1380s: *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 82. Although there is no firm evidence to link Ilshawe to Mowbray before 1401 when he was acting as a receiver for the Mowbray estates in the county, there is circumstantial evidence that he was attached to Mowbray's circle. In 1396, Ilshawe was mainperned by Hugh Dalby: TNA KB 27/542, Rex, m. 24d.; Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 116–17.

⁸¹ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 138, 140, 159; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 240–2; above, pp. 95–101.

⁸² Above, pp. 139–40; *RP* III, pp. 313–14.

was only with his consent that Gaunt was able to extend his power in the midlands. As Walker has shown, with the Stafford interest in abeyance, Lancaster was able to enlarge his influence from Derbyshire, where his influence was pervasive, into Staffordshire, where previously the Staffords had been dominant. Gaunt's castle and honour of Tutbury, on the Derbyshire–Staffordshire border, gave him a base for this.⁸³ The growing importance of Tutbury as a focus for the Lancastrian affinity in the midlands more widely is evident in the actions of one of Lancaster's men, John Blount, who used the castle as a base for his activities in Worcestershire in 1392–3.⁸⁴ As in the 1370s, Lancaster was also able to assert his influence from his Leicestershire estates as well as through his power base at Kenilworth Castle, which was conveniently close to the king's own holdings at Coventry.⁸⁵ But from 1395, as Richard began to believe that he was more secure, relations between the king and the duke became less friendly. As Walker has shown, this was reflected in the pressure placed on Gaunt's influence in Staffordshire and Lancashire by the king's affinity. Nevertheless, it seems very unlikely that Richard would have contemplated an open attack on Lancastrian influence while the duke was alive.⁸⁶

Richard's need to retain members of the nobility and their affinities in his quest to control the politics of the West Midlands becomes clear when the roles of the gentry members of the royal affinity are considered. Apart from John Russell and William Bagot, whose close connections to the king added an extra dimension to their role in local politics, the other gentry members of the royal affinity with estates in the West Midlands were not particularly active in local politics. At first, Richard concentrated on renewing older allegiances to the crown. For example, Sir John atte Wode of Wolverley (Worcestershire) and his wife were confirmed in their income of 12d a day. The atte Wodes had a long history of service to the royal family which stretched back over thirty years.⁸⁷ Similarly, another long-serving chamber knight, Baldwin Bereford of Wishaw (Warwickshire), received an additional annuity in 1393.⁸⁸ Atte

⁸³ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 222–8; note also that this was accompanied by increasing disorder in the 1390s, caused by new members of the Lancastrian affinity in Staffordshire, a very similar situation to that found in the West Midlands: below, pp. 175–6.

⁸⁴ Below, pp. 171–2. ⁸⁵ Above, pp. 57–8, 68–9.

⁸⁶ Walsingham comments that when Gaunt returned from Aquitaine in 1395, the king greeted him with honour, 'but without love': *Annales*, pp. 187–8; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 174–9.

⁸⁷ *CPR* 1388–92, p. 394. Atte Wode was a valet to Edward III by 1361: Driver, 'Knights of the Shire II', pp. 20–1.

⁸⁸ In March 1393 Bereford was granted £10 per annum for life from Cheylesmore; the following November he was granted the manor of Cheylesmore, also for life. He had been retained by Richard since 1377 and had also been a member of the Black Prince's retinue: *CPR* 1391–6, pp. 260, 334; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 282; Green, 'Later Retinue of the Edward the Black Prince', p. 151.

Wode and Bereford were both experienced servants of the crown, whose presence in the region had never caused disruption, and whose role in the 1390s did not deviate from this.

The new members of the royal affinity made even less of an impact on local politics. In Worcestershire, Russell remained the sole gentry representative of the affinity.⁸⁹ In Warwickshire, some members of the gentry were retained, including Adam Peshale (1390) and William Arundel (1392).⁹⁰ Peshale was an outsider who acquired landed interests in Warwickshire through his marriage to the widow of Baldwin Freville II.⁹¹ Arundel, a kinsman of the earl of Arundel, had inherited lands in the county, although he also had considerable interests outside the region as well.⁹² The crucial factor which linked both men to the king was that each held land near Coventry. The dower of Freville's widow included Pinley and Stivichall in Coventry.⁹³ Arundel's manor of Brandon also lay close to the town.⁹⁴ These circumstances suggest that tenure of land in the Coventry region may have served as a means of alerting Richard to candidates suitable for his affinity. Conversely, by retaining men with estates close to his own power base in Warwickshire, Richard was able to augment his own resources in the region. He also tried to increase his affinity's influence in Warwickshire through further grants of land. For example, Arundel was granted custody of Ansty (near Coventry) and Shottery (in Stratford) in 1394.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the deed evidence shows that these men were not very active participants in the socio-political life of Warwickshire, probably because their main interests lay elsewhere. Peshale appears to have been too much occupied with the administration of Shropshire and Staffordshire to take an interest in his Warwickshire estates.⁹⁶ Arundel was slightly more active: in 1397 he became involved very briefly in the Ladbroke dispute and he also used a Warwickshire esquire, Alan Waldeyeve, as a mainpernor.⁹⁷ But apart from this, Arundel's

⁸⁹ Although two gentry with lands in Worcestershire were retained by Richard (William Beauchamp of Powick and Hugh Cheyne), their interests were concentrated across the border in Gloucestershire and Shropshire respectively: Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 284.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 282, 284.

⁹¹ *CPR 1388–92*, p. 27. Peshale was prominent in Staffordshire and Shropshire, where he was regularly appointed to local office; *HP* iv, pp. 61–3; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 221, 247, 249; Mitchell, 'Knightly Household of Richard II', p. 120.

⁹² Arundel was the younger son of John Lord Arundel and nephew to the earl; his main landed interests were in Sussex and Surrey: Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 165.

⁹³ The settlement of dower was made on Joyce and Adam in 1388: SBT DR 10/485.

⁹⁴ *VCH Warwicks*, vi, p. 276. ⁹⁵ *CPR 1391–6*, pp. 378, 382.

⁹⁶ Although he and Joyce did join the Coventry Guild of the Holy Trinity: *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Trinity, St. Mary, John the Baptist and St. Katherine of Coventry*, ed. M. D. Harris (Dugdale Society 13, 1935), p. 4.

⁹⁷ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 321, 333–4; *CFR 1391–9*, p. 173; below, p. 216.

name, together with that of Peshale, is entirely lacking from lists of feoffees and witnesses in the county. Even allowing for the loss of evidence, their apparent non-engagement with Warwickshire politics is strikingly reflected in their absence from local office in the period.

The lack of local involvement of other gentry members of the royal affinity in the West Midlands enhanced the influence and role of the two fully resident members, John Russell and William Bagot. Bagot had begun his connection with the king by August 1389.⁹⁸ It seems likely that the geographical position of his main seat at Baginton, which lay on the outskirts of Coventry, played an important part in attracting the king's attention. In 1391, the king recognised and expanded Bagot's influence in the town by granting him the stewardship of Cheylesmore.⁹⁹ The growth of a royal power base, centred on Coventry and Baginton and personified by Bagot, is reflected in the charges brought against him in 1396, which identified Baginton as the centre for Bagot's alleged misdeeds.¹⁰⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that Bagot's circle of associates was also drawn mostly from the region around Coventry. They included William Swetenham of Coventry,¹⁰¹ John Bray of Stretton¹⁰² and Adomar Lichfeld of Coventry and Lichfield.¹⁰³ Bagot's role as a link between the centre and the West Midlands meant that he continued to take an active part in local administration. In particular, he was a regular appointee to governmental commissions, especially to those concerning Coventry itself and royal rights in Feckenham.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ *HP* II, pp. 99–103, although he was not officially retained until 1398: Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, p. 283.

⁹⁹ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 2. This grant was at the request of Baldwin Bereford, who had held the post since 1384. It looks as if Richard was transferring much of the responsibility for the administration of his lands to the more dynamic Bagot.

¹⁰⁰ Below, pp. 181–4.

¹⁰¹ Swetenham was accused of involvement in Bagot's plot to besiege Coventry in 1395, and of being a member of Bagot's *familia* in 1396: *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 76–8; TNA KB 9/176, m. 176; below, pp. 180–1. He was also a member of the Coventry Guild of the Holy Trinity: *Guild of the Holy Trinity*, p. 93.

¹⁰² Bray was under-sheriff of Warwickshire during Bagot's term as sheriff, 1382–4: TNA KB 9/176, m. 13. The circle were also often associated together as witnesses and feoffees in the Coventry region, for example: SBT DR 10/688 (Bray witness to lease by Bagot, 1387); *The Statute Merchant Roll of Coventry, 1392–1416*, ed. A. Beardwood (Dugdale Society 17, 1939), p. 6 (Bray and Bagot as co-recognitors, 1393).

¹⁰³ Lichfeld, alias Taverner of Lichfield, was associated with Bagot in 1382 when they were co-plaintiffs: TNA CP 40/484, m. 148. He was also accused of involvement in Bagot's plot to besiege Coventry in 1395: *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 77–8; below, pp. 179–81. In 1396, he stood surety for Bagot: TNA KB 27/541, Rex, m. 26. Lichfeld was clearly in favour with the king, since he was appointed sheriff of Warwickshire twice, in 1389–90 and 1398–9 and sheriff of Staffordshire-Shropshire in 1393: *L&I* 9, p. 145; King, 'Richard II, Shropshire and the North March', pp. 76–7. For his career, see *HP* II, pp. 601–2.

¹⁰⁴ Below, pp. 163, 179.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

By contrast, John Russell took little part in the administration of Worcestershire. His career as master of the king's horse and his reputation as a jousting suggest that he was retained first by Warwick and then by Richard for his military prowess, not his administrative abilities.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, Russell's presence in Worcestershire as the main representative of the royal affinity had dramatic consequences for power structures in the region. The most striking aspect of his career was his role as a power broker. The phenomenon of members of the gentry acting as power brokers in the localities has been observed in the politics of the fifteenth century. During a power vacuum, a leading member of the local gentry might assume the role of a leading magnate, drawing men into his circle and acting as a link between the centre and the locality.¹⁰⁶ In Worcestershire, however, there was already an active magnate in the person of Warwick, and the rise of Russell and his circle represented an aberration within local politics. The grouping around Russell contained two of his kinsmen, Robert Russell¹⁰⁷ and John Vampage.¹⁰⁸ Russell was also associated with a member of the Lancastrian affinity, John Blount,¹⁰⁹ and the king's knight and councillor, Sir Richard Stury.¹¹⁰ The links between the members of this group were further strengthened through Stury's marriage to Blount's kinswoman.¹¹¹ During the 1390s, the circle around Russell relied on one another and fellow members of the royal

¹⁰⁵ *HP* IV, pp. 248–51; above, pp. 127–8.

¹⁰⁶ For example, Simon Mountford in 1460s Warwickshire: note that he, like Bagot, caused considerable disruption locally, and, also like Bagot, based his power in part on the Coventry region: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 497–516. The Stanleys in fourteenth-century Cheshire served a similar, though less disruptive, function: Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism*, pp. 215–33. See also Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 362–3, 373–4.

¹⁰⁷ Russell may have been John's illegitimate half-brother. He made his career as a lawyer, and in the 1370s had connections with the Beauchamp affinity, acting as the earl's attorney in 1377: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 410. By 1394, however, he had moved into his brother's sphere: he was an attorney for John in 1394 and a feoffee in 1397: *CPR* 1391–6, p. 509; *CCR* 1396–9, p. 227. He may have owed his election as MP for Worcestershire in 1395 to John's influence: *HP* IV, pp. 255–6.

¹⁰⁸ Vampage's mother was a Russell. He had begun his career as an auditor for the bishop of Worcester (1392–6), but, during the 1390s, he moved into Russell's circle. In 1397 he was a feoffee to Russell: *HP* IV, pp. 248–51; Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, p. 384; *CCR* 1396–9, p. 227.

¹⁰⁹ Blount came from Soddington in north-west Worcestershire. In 1397 he was witness to Russell's enfeoffment of property, but their connection went back to at least 1392, when Blount became involved in Russell's dispute with Lyllyng: *VCH Wors.* IV, pp. 286–7; *CCR* 1396–9, p. 227; *HP* II, pp. 255–7; below, pp. 175–6. Blount may also have owed his appointments to local office (including the office of alnager in 1395) to Russell's influence: *CPR* 1391–9, p. 165. For his connection to the Lancastrian affinity: below, pp. 175.

¹¹⁰ Like Russell, Stury was one of Richard's chamber knights. He was also a regular attendee at sessions of the king's council: Baldwin, *King's Council*, pp. 132–4; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 142–3; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 148–9, 184–5, 280–3; Saul, *Richard II*, p. 253.

¹¹¹ Stury had married Alice, the heiress to the senior Blount line, by March 1393. Her inheritance included half of the manor of Hampton Lovett and the manor of Thickenappletree: TNA CP 25/1/289/56, m. 250; *VCH Wors.* III, pp. 153–4.

affinity as feoffees, attorneys and witnesses to deeds; there was no overlap with the rest of Worcestershire political society, which remained dominated by the Beauchamp interest.¹¹² This evidence suggests very strongly that the relationship between the earl and his affinity on the one hand and Russell on the other had been fractured. As we shall see, this impression is confirmed by the events in southern Worcestershire in 1392–3, in which Russell and members of the Beauchamp affinity were the key protagonists and adversaries.¹¹³

In conclusion, the structure and personnel of the royal affinity were based both on the gentry and on the nobility. Whilst there was systematic recruitment of the gentry, neither their numbers nor their practical influence were enough on their own for Richard to control local politics through them alone. The nobility were still the dominant members of local political society, and those trusted by Richard formed an integral part of this policy. The argument that Richard was attempting to reform local order by bypassing the disorderly magnates and appealing directly to the gentry cannot be sustained, therefore. But what was the affinity's actual function? It is now a commonplace that Richard's attitude towards local politics in the 1390s was rooted in his search for security, but, as noted earlier, what has not been fully recognised is that his use of the royal affinity for these purposes was an aberration within the medieval polity. Since Richard's attempt to build up support locally was undoubtedly the result of his deep-seated mistrust of some members of his nobility, it seems unlikely that local conditions would be any more stable than they were to be under Henry IV when the king used the same tactics in the area to the north.¹¹⁴ In fact, as the next two chapters will argue, as Richard used his affinity, of both nobility and gentry, deliberately to undermine the power and influence of Warwick and to replace him with men he thought he could trust, the result was more, not less, local disorder. Richard employed a variety of tactics to achieve his goal, including control of appointments to local office, manipulation of legal procedure and supporting his own men in

¹¹² See, for example, the enfeoffment made by Russell in November 1397. His feoffees were Roger Walden (the archbishop of Canterbury), William Arundel (the chamber knight), Robert Russell, John Vampage and the royal clerks Richard de la Felde, John Lincoln, Thomas More and Richard Wellom: *CCR 1396–9*, p. 227.

¹¹³ Below, pp. 167–76.

¹¹⁴ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 208–16; Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*, pp. 205–12. For a full discussion of the historiography of the royal affinity: above, pp. 14–15, 21–3. Note, also that Richard's retaining policy drew contemporary criticism. The author of 'Richard the Redeless', writing in c. 1399–1400, has a long diatribe against the abuses by Richard's badged retainers, and, crucially, remarks that for every badge Richard gave out, he lost the hearts of ten of his faithful subjects: *Mum and the Sothsegger*, ed. M. Day and R. Steele (Early English Text Society, OS, 199, 1936), pp. 7–10.

local disputes. These policies have often been identified as an integral part of Richard's tyranny from 1397, but it is important to recognise that he had begun to implement them from the 1380s.¹¹⁵ The events of 1397 did not represent a sudden reversal in Richard's policy, only an intensification.

From May 1389, although Warwick no longer had the kind of influence he had experienced briefly in 1387–8, neither did he disappear entirely from the central political stage, as has often been assumed.¹¹⁶ He seems to have retained his former links with Arundel as well as his sympathies with Arundel's dislike of Richard's conduct of foreign policy. For example, in 1394 Warwick was a witness to Arundel's complaint against Lancaster in parliament; and in August 1394 he stood surety for Arundel on the latter's release from the Tower.¹¹⁷ Warwick's continuing connections to Arundel can have done little to mitigate the king's suspicions. Warwick also remained active in other aspects of central politics: he attended meetings of the Great Council until 1395, and seems to have been present at sessions of parliament; he was definitely there for the sessions held in November 1390, November 1391 and January 1397.¹¹⁸ Nor were his visits to London solely confined to parliamentary and council business. After the 1391 parliament, he was present in chancery to hear the latest petition in the Ladbroke dispute; this may have been an attempt to strengthen his standing locally by demonstrating that he still had influence at the centre.¹¹⁹ The earl's activity here was accompanied by his continuing exercise of local lordship. In some areas of local politics he even became more active, particularly in his roles as JP and sheriff of Worcestershire.¹²⁰

Ominously for Warwick, he found that from 1389 he was increasingly unable to respond to challenges to his influence on his estates outside the West Midlands. In 1394, Bolingbroke successfully sued him for the return of Long Buckby (Northamptonshire).¹²¹ Between 1392 and 1394, Warwick was also involved in a dispute with the Tregoy's family of Cornwall, who, he claimed, were his neifs. This appears to have been an example of the growing determination of landlords to maintain their seigneurial rights in the face of massive social and economic change in the wake of the Black Death. It seems that the

¹¹⁵ Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', pp. 2–18.

¹¹⁶ Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 155; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 235, 372.

¹¹⁷ *RP* III, pp. 313–14; *CCR* 1392–6, p. 368; above, pp. 139–40.

¹¹⁸ Saul, *Richard II*, p. 372, n. 25; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 331–2; *RP* III, p. 341.

¹¹⁹ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 319–20.

¹²⁰ Below, pp. 176–7, 181–4.

¹²¹ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 51–2.

Tregoyts were already independent of the earl, and had considerable influence in their native Cornwall, together with substantial knowledge of legal procedure. The result was embarrassment for Warwick, as the case was pursued through the courts and in parliament, with the Tregoyts consistently evading and defeating his purposes.¹²² These reverses may help to explain why Warwick felt the need to compile a cartulary in c. 1395–6; his estates and privileges had suffered serious erosion, and he may already have suspected that Richard and Mowbray were planning an attack on his tenure of the lordship of Gower.¹²³ The cartulary was a desperate attempt to enshrine Warwick's inheritance in writing. Warwick's experiences with the Tregoyts and his loss of Long Buckby were symptoms outside the West Midlands of his predicament at the heart of his power, as he found himself under pressure from the king's policies.

In the West Midlands the king's first objective was to replace the Beauchamp affinity in the local administration with members drawn from his own affinity. This was a gradual process, conditioned by the geo-political structures of the two counties involved, which, as has already been shown, differed considerably.¹²⁴ In Warwickshire, the centrifugal nature of the geo-political forces meant that Warwick had never been able to dominate county politics completely.¹²⁵ From late 1389, his position worsened as Richard actively encouraged Lancaster's involvement in Warwickshire politics. At the same time, Mowbray's emergence in the region added an extra dimension to the political complexion of appointments to local office, especially the shrievalty. Because the shrievalty was held jointly with Leicestershire, where Warwick had little influence, it was relatively easy for the king to ensure that the men appointed were unconnected to the Beauchamp affinity.¹²⁶ Of the men chosen, one was almost certainly associated with the Lancastrian affinity (Henry Neville, 1395–6), and another (Sir Robert Harryngton, 1390–1) may also have

¹²² *CPR* 1391–6, pp. 167–8, 430; *CCR* 1392–6, pp. 64, 104, 199; *RP* III, p. 326; Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, p. 137; J. N. Hare, 'The Wiltshire Risings of 1450: Political and Economic Discontent in Mid-Fifteenth-Century England', *Southern History*, 4 (1982), 13–31, esp. p. 28. For the career of John Tregoyts, who had links with Robert Tresilian in the 1380s: *HP* IV, pp. 643–4.

¹²³ *Beauchamp Cartulary*, pp. xi–xii. The editor notes that the preparation appears to have been done in a hurry; below, pp. 185–7.

¹²⁴ Discussed in [Chapter 1](#).

¹²⁵ Above, pp. 33–6, 40–7.

¹²⁶ *LEI* 9, p. 145; Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 146–7. They were: Adomar Lichfeld of Lichfield and Coventry (1389–90): above, pp. 157 and n. 103; Robert Harryngton (1390–1); Sir John Mallory of Newbold Revel (Warwks.) and Walton (Leics.) (1391–2); John Wodeford of Leicestershire (1392–3); Thomas Oudeby of Rutland and Hathern (Leics.) (1393–4); Robert Veer of Leicestershire (1394–5); Henry Neville (1395–6); Robert Goushill (1396–7). For a similar pattern in the 1370s, which was also influenced by Lancaster's lands in Leicestershire: above, pp. 68–9.

had connections to the duke.¹²⁷ Similarly, Robert Goushill was appointed sheriff in 1396 because of his association with Mowbray, whilst Thomas Oudeby was connected with the king himself.¹²⁸ Although there is scant information about the affiliations of other sheriffs who were primarily Leicestershire men, such as Robert Veer and John Wodeford, it is certain that none of these men were Warwick's.¹²⁹

In Worcestershire, the king's tactics were very different. The power structures already described made direct royal interference in some aspects of local government and legal administration even more difficult.¹³⁰ With the key office of sheriff in the hands of Warwick, whom Richard perceived as his enemy, the only administrative offices which could be controlled from the centre were those of JP and escheator. However, such was Warwick's landed dominance in the region that the king found it hard at first to find men who were not attached to the earl to fill these offices.

Although the office of escheator did not possess the same possibilities for manipulation of legal procedure as those of sheriff or JP, the king tried to ensure that men favourable to him were appointed to the position in Worcestershire. As early as November 1389, Despenser's potential influence in the region was acknowledged when his officer, Robert Badby, was appointed. Within three months Badby had been replaced by John Wasshebourne, the Beauchamp retainer. It is uncertain whether Badby had died, or whether Warwick brought pressure to bear on the centre to achieve his removal.¹³¹ It is possible that the government was

¹²⁷ Neville was from Prestwold in Leicestershire. He was made a king's knight by Henry IV in 1401, but he was clearly linked to Henry before this date: in January 1400 he helped to put down the Earls' Rebellion, and in November 1400 he became sheriff of Warwickshire again. It is not implausible, therefore, that he already had links with Bolingbroke and the Lancastrian affinity before the deposition: *HP* III, pp. 819–20. Harryngton's links are more tenuous, but in 1392 he was a co-litigant with William Chiseldon, the Receiver of the Duchy of Lancaster: *HP* III, pp. 297–9. In February 1397, Harryngton was jointly bound with Sir William Beauchamp, Sir Henry Grene, William Bagot and others for William Beauchamp's debts: these associations suggest Harryngton may have had connections with the court: *CCR* 1396–9, p. 83.

¹²⁸ For Goushill: above, pp. 153–4. Oudeby's brother John was clearly in favour with Richard since he was reappointed to the forfeited Beauchamp chamberlainship of the exchequer in 1397. Thomas was equally well trusted by Richard: from 1397 to 1399 he was sheriff of Rutland: *HP* III, pp. 884–5; he also raised 100 men for the king in 1399: *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: The Reign of Richard II*, ed. C. Given-Wilson (Manchester, 1993), p. 250.

¹²⁹ Veer acquired land in Leicestershire through marriage to an heiress, who was the widow of the Lancastrian retainer Roger Perewych, for whom above, p. 82. Initially, Veer got himself into trouble with the king through a dispute with a king's knight in 1392, but, as his appointment in 1394 shows, he soon recovered. Perhaps he had links with Lancaster: his marriage to Perewych's widow would certainly suggest this: *HP* IV, pp. 711–12; Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 341, 344. Wodeford was definitely from Leicestershire, but his links have yet to be ascertained: Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 323–6.

¹³⁰ Above, pp. 43–4.

¹³¹ *List of Escheators*, p. 178. In early 1390, Badby was sued by Elizabeth Despenser (Thomas' mother) to render account for the time when he was her receiver: TNA CP 40/516, m. 166d.

searching for a candidate without links to Warwick, but in 1389–90 this was a near-impossible task, since all the men with experience and influence in the county tended to be in Warwick's service, and the royal affinity was not yet fully established. In October 1392, however, a candidate acceptable to the king was found in the person of John Blount, a member of the Lancastrian affinity and an associate of John Russell. Blount held the office for two years. By January 1397, Warwick's influence had been destroyed, and Richard was able to appoint John Russell's kinsman and associate, John Vampage.¹³²

Richard also made his intentions towards Warwick clear in his resumption of the use of centralised commissions to deal with disturbances in the forest of Feckenham caused by the continuing dispute between the bishop of Worcester and royal officials. It is significant that this policy of centralised commissions coincided with the return of Lancaster, with whom it had been associated in the 1370s, and which Richard had begun to espouse in 1387. It is also noticeable that, from 1389, King's Bench began its annual perambulations once more.¹³³ Between 1391 and 1395, four commissions of oyer and terminer and one of inquiry were issued regarding trespasses and felonies committed against the king's tenants in Feckenham and Newbury.¹³⁴ The most striking element of these sweeping royal commissions was their personnel.¹³⁵ As in the 1370s, Warwick was excluded entirely, and an increasing number of outsiders were introduced. Apart from the first commission in 1391, Sir William Beauchamp, as custodian of the royal manor at Feckenham, continued to be appointed, but his influence was counterbalanced by the inclusion of men such as William Bagot, the royal councillor Edward Dallingridge and the king's knight Henry Greene.¹³⁶ None of these men had any land in the county, but all were closely linked to the king. The royal message to the earl was clear: he could no longer expect the king to allow his dominance in

¹³² *List of Escheators*, p. 178; above, pp. 156–9.

¹³³ Above, pp. 90–3. The only years when King's Bench did not move out of London were 1394–5, when Richard was absent for much of the time in Ireland: Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 204–5.

¹³⁴ *CPR* 1388–92, p. 440–1 (May 1391); *CPR* 1391–6, pp. 84 (commission of inquiry, March 1392), 433–4 (April 1394), 520 (July 1394), 588 (February 1395).

¹³⁵ The commissioners were: 1 May 1391: Lancaster, Gloucester, William Bagot, John Cassy, Robert Cherlton (assize justice), John Knyghtley, John Peyto (Mowbray's man: above, p. 153), Nicholas Stafford; 2 March 1392: William Beauchamp, John Cassy, Thomas Cosyn, Edward Dallingridge, John Knyghtley, Thomas Purfrey, Nicholas Stafford; 13 April 1394: Beauchamp, William Bagot, Robert Cherlton, Henry Greene, John Knyghtley, William Purfrey, William Thirnyng (assize justice); 12 July 1394: the same as April; 15 February 1395: Beauchamp, Bagot, Hugh Burnell, Cassy, Cherlton, Thirnyng, William Wilicotes (assize justice).

¹³⁶ Dallingridge came from Sussex. For his career see *HP* II, pp. 738–42; Greene came from Northamptonshire: *HP* III, pp. 225–8.

Worcestershire to continue unchallenged. With the death of the bishop of Worcester in 1395, Richard was able to end the dispute for good by ensuring that the pope nominated Richard's candidate, the royal physician, Tideman of Winchcombe. After 1395, no more commissions were issued, which suggests that the matter had been resolved to Richard's satisfaction. At the same time, Richard had achieved a notable coup by placing the extensive lands and liberties of the bishopric in the hands of one of his courtier bishops.¹³⁷

To treat Richard's policy towards office-holding as separate from his policy towards law and order in the localities is to create a false impression of his rule, however. Richard was not only attempting to replace the Beauchamp affinity as a source of local officers; he was also seeking to humiliate Warwick publicly, thus making it easier for him to justify the earl's exclusion from power. Some of Richard's methods have attracted attention from historians, but none have been consistently contextualised within his local rule. Perhaps the most important of these was the use of legal procedures outside the common law, which gave Richard an element of surprise and allowed his opponents little opportunity to defend themselves. His increasing use of the council and the courts of the admiralty and marshal have been described by historians, but an examination of local politics in the 1390s reveals that these studies have not fully appreciated the extent, nature or purpose of the king's experimentation with, and manipulation of, civil legal procedure.¹³⁸

Baldwin was the first to suggest that Richard used the council as an instrument of royal absolutism.¹³⁹ This theory has never achieved wider acceptance, however, particularly in modern interpretations of Richard's rule which deny any early attempt at autocracy. In fact, as we have seen, it has become increasingly common to argue that in the early 1390s Richard accepted a measure of conciliar control over his rule.¹⁴⁰ This argument is based on John Prophete's journal of council proceedings between 1390 and 1392, which gives the first real insight into the proceedings of the council.¹⁴¹ But because the journal itself is the first substantial evidence to survive from the council records, it has been too readily assumed that it chronicled the arrival of a more consensual style of government on Richard's part in the 1390s. It is equally possible that the survival of

¹³⁷ For the context of Tideman's appointment: McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 474–5; above, pp. 47–9.

¹³⁸ Baldwin, *King's Council*, pp. 130–44; Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', pp. 2–6; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 151–2.

¹³⁹ Baldwin, *King's Council*, pp. 130–44. ¹⁴⁰ Above, pp. 9–10, 139–40.

¹⁴¹ Baldwin, *King's Council*, appendix II; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 139–43; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 251–6. For literature on the constitutional role of the council in general, A. L. Brown, *The Governance of Late Medieval England, 1272–1461* (London, 1989), pp. 34–41.

Prophete's journal is accidental, and that the council was acting much as before, even if it now had a more broadly based membership.

Recently, the work of Watts has added an extra dimension to discussions on the role of the council. He has argued that the existence of a council with formal advisory powers was inimical to the operation of medieval kingship since it implied a measure of restriction on the king's actions. It should not be assumed, therefore, that the council normally experienced anything more than a subservient advisory role. Rather, the council was the king's to be used by him as a sounding-board, and for matters of administrative complexity.¹⁴² The idea that Richard would defer to his council does not make sense; Prophete's journal represents the council functioning as an aide to the king, and no more. This argument is further strengthened by the way in which Richard used his council both as a means of extending royal judicial control into the localities and as an instrument to punish and humiliate his personal enemies.

In the 1390s, there does appear to be a quantitative increase in Richard's use of the council as a means of dealing with local disputes. Summonses to appear before the council were recorded in the patent rolls, and there are more of them from the West Midlands than at any other time in the period from 1369.¹⁴³ For example, in July 1389 an order was issued to arrest Richard Bredon of Eldersfield and to bring him before the king. No mention of the council is made on this occasion, although it seems likely that Bredon would have been produced before it.¹⁴⁴ In February 1390, specific reference is made to the council in the case of Ralph Stafford of Grafton (Worcestershire), a distant kinsman of the earls of Stafford, who had been arrested and put in the Tower prior to an appearance before the king and council.¹⁴⁵ Similar proceedings were initiated against Nicholas Pole, a chaplain, in June 1392, and John Drayton, a litigant in the Aston dispute (to be discussed shortly), in July 1394.¹⁴⁶ In March 1392, representatives of the towns of Tamworth and Walsall were to be produced before the king and council in order to resolve a dispute concerning tolls and markets. Interestingly, neither of these towns was royal; Tamworth was owned by the Freville family whilst Warwick

¹⁴² J. L. Watts, 'The Counsels of Henry VI, c. 1435–45', *EHR*, 106 (1991), 279–98; Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 78–80.

¹⁴³ W. M. Ormrod, 'The Origins of the *Sub Poena Writ*', *Historical Research*, 61 (1988), pp. 18–19. He argues that that there was a distinct increase in the use of the writ from 1386–9; the evidence from the West Midlands suggests a slightly later starting date, perhaps because the original upturn in usage was connected to the Appellants' regime, whilst from 1389 Richard had appropriated it as a weapon.

¹⁴⁴ *CPR* 1388–92, p. 135. For the context of Bredon's arrest: below, pp. 167–70.

¹⁴⁵ *CCR* 1389–92, pp. 115–16. For Stafford's career, see *HP* IV, p. 444.

¹⁴⁶ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 165; *CCR* 1392–6, pp. 158, 163. For the Aston dispute: below, pp. 177–9.

was the lord of Walsall.¹⁴⁷ This suggests that the king was prepared to be involved in urban disputes, even when he did not have immediate overlordship. As we shall see, in May 1396, a commission was ordered to arrest William Mountford, John Holt and others, presumably as a result of their involvement in the Aston dispute. They, too, were to be brought before king and council.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, no proceedings of the council survive for any of these cases, and it is impossible to tell in some cases whether the arrests were carried out, or why they were ordered. However, the increased level of activity does suggest that Richard was already beginning to use the council an interventionary way, a foretaste of its more dramatic use in the tyranny, when it is generally acknowledged that this body played a key part in intimidating and subduing any opposition to the king.¹⁴⁹ This impression is confirmed by two cases in which Richard used the council as a weapon against those men he did not trust. The first, not from the West Midlands, involved the earl of Devon, and the second, a West Midlands case, Warwick's chief steward, Sir Nicholas Lyllyn.

The case in which the earl of Devon became involved in January 1392, although well known, needs to be placed in the wider context of the king's policy towards local order. The proceedings were highly unusual in that they involved the trial and punishment of an earl who was accused of perverting the course of justice to protect his own esquire from indictment for murder. The earl asked for the king's mercy, but was adjudged to imprisonment until he made fine. At this point, the other lords present intervened on his behalf, and asked the king for a pardon, which was granted.¹⁵⁰ Tuck saw this incident as a 'victory' for the magnates, who were prepared to protect one of their own number at the expense of good order. He also interpreted this council session as a continuation of Richard's policy of appealing to the parliamentary Commons through action on their complaints against livery and maintenance.¹⁵¹ But as the work of Tyldesley and Cherry has shown, Richard's actions regarding the earl of Devon were not motivated by a desire to promote better local order, but rather to humiliate the earl and provide an excuse for his replacement with another local magnate better trusted by the king, in the person of his half-brother, Thomas Holland earl of Huntingdon. These historians have suggested that the local dispute which led to Devon's

¹⁴⁷ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 40. *CIPM* 1399–1405, pp. 159–74; *VCH Warwicks*, IV, p. 246; for the Frevilles, see above, pp. 58–9.

¹⁴⁸ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 731; the Aston dispute is discussed below, pp. 177–9.

¹⁴⁹ Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', pp. 4–5, 7–8.

¹⁵⁰ *Select Cases before the King's Council, 1243–1482*, ed. I. S. Leadham and J. F. Baldwin (Selden Society 35, 1918), pp. 77–81.

¹⁵¹ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 147–50.

disgrace had been precipitated by the steady accumulation of an alternative source of landed power in the region in the hands of Holland. Rivalries had developed between the two earls' affinities, which had led to the murder of one of Holland's men by one of Courtenay's retainers. Devon had then tried to protect his man from the ensuing judicial inquiries and the result had been his own disgrace. Richard used his council to censure, humiliate and thus weaken Devon. Significantly, once Richard had achieved this, Devon was removed from the county bench and replaced by Holland.¹⁵² By presenting Devon as both corrupt and bungling, Richard was able to justify both his removal from a position of prominence in local politics and the earl's replacement with a magnate the king felt he could trust.

In the light of this evidence, Tuck's interpretation of the Courtenay case as a noble victory cannot be sustained, although his suggestion that Richard was using the case to promote his image as the upholder of the law against noble abuses in the eyes of the Commons is very plausible.¹⁵³ By presenting the case as an example of noble interference in the smooth course of royal justice, Richard was able to put Courtenay in the wrong and depict himself as a monarch concerned for the preservation of good order. This fits with the earlier rhetoric of 1388–90.¹⁵⁴ In keeping with the more sinister aspect of his policy in the localities, at the same time he was able to use this rhetorical disguise to provide an excuse for Courtenay's removal from power and his replacement with the king's own man. A year later, Richard used a similar strategy to the same effect in Worcestershire.

In many respects, the situation in Worcestershire resembled that in Devon, where Warwick was as equally dominant as Courtenay.¹⁵⁵ As we have seen, John Russell had become the main representative of the new royal affinity in Worcestershire.¹⁵⁶ His relations with the Warwick affinity deteriorated rapidly after 1389.¹⁵⁷ It seems that Russell was still attempting

¹⁵² Tyldesley, 'Crown and Local Communities', pp. 157–80; Cherry, 'Courtenay Earls of Devon', pp. 89–92. For an opposing view, see Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 243–4, who argues that, whilst Courtenay was alienated by the intrusion of Holland, the latter's presence in Devon represented an 'outpost of Ricardian lordship in county where royal power had previously been weak'. This implies that royal power did not equate with Courtenay's power.

¹⁵³ Tuck *Richard II*, pp. 148–9. ¹⁵⁴ Above, pp. 146–9.

¹⁵⁵ Cherry, 'Courtenay Earls of Devon', pp. 71–80. ¹⁵⁶ Above, pp. 151, 156.

¹⁵⁷ During the Merciless Parliament Russell appears to have come to some sort of agreement with Warwick, however. In March 1388 he enfeoffed his three main manors of Peopleton, Strensham and Dormston to a group of Warwick's men including Walter Power, John Danyel and Nicholas Trymenell, together with court-connected men, such as John Worth (who held Milcote, Warwks.) and John Cassy (a baron of the exchequer and local landowner). This may represent a surety for Russell's good behaviour. It is noticeable that Russell had these transactions confirmed in the close rolls in April 1396, the period when Warwick's position was becoming increasingly uncertain. Was Russell protecting his property in the event of the earl's fall?: *CCR 1396–9*, pp. 504–5.

to acquire the land in Earl's Croome which had been the source of his original estrangement in 1387.¹⁵⁸ Although there is no record of this in any of the law courts, this in itself is not surprising, since Warwick, as sheriff, would have been able to suppress any attempts by Russell to sue for the land. There was certainly a rapid growth of tension and ill-feeling between the Beauchamp affinity and Russell in the early 1390s. This was fostered by the location of Russell's landed estates and of the land under dispute. Russell's property lay in the heartland of Warwick's own estates, as did the disputed land at Earl's Croome.¹⁵⁹ Russell's near neighbours were invariably Beauchamp retainers and tenants, and it is not hard to imagine the resulting tensions and ill-feeling which must have arisen from such continuous close contact.

Even if the evidence that Russell continued to press his claim to the land at Earl's Croome before 1392 can only be inferred from the subsequent events of 1392–3, there is firmer evidence that from 1389 the coterie of men attached to him was involved in another dispute in the region of south-west Worcestershire, and it may be that Russell himself was behind the affair. This dispute centred on the region around Eldersfield on the Worcestershire–Gloucestershire border, the area where the Despensers held a bloc of lands centring on Hanley Castle. It was between two relatively insignificant men who appear to have had powerful connections.¹⁶⁰ One protagonist was Richard Bredon of Eldersfield, who appears to have had influential friends in the Beauchamp affinity. These included Sir William Beauchamp, who had obtained a pardon for Bredon after he was accused of the murder of the bailiff of Redmarley d'Abitot in August 1382. This manor was acquired after 1381 by the Despensers, and it is possible that the murder related to the purchase.¹⁶¹ The second protagonist was William Russell of Corse (Gloucestershire), who appears to have been a kinsman of Sir Maurice Russell of Dyrham (Gloucestershire), although unrelated to Sir John Russell.¹⁶²

It seems that there had already been tension in the region between Bredon and the Despenser interest in the early 1380s, but that the dispute was relatively contained. From 1389, however, as Thomas Despenser began to emerge from his minority and attracted the king's attention as an ally against Warwick, the dispute entered a new and more sustained

¹⁵⁸ Above, pp. 127–8. ¹⁵⁹ For Russell's lands: above, pp. 127–8.

¹⁶⁰ For the Despenser lands: above, p. 52.

¹⁶¹ *CPR* 1385–9, p. 511; *VCH Worts.* iv, pp. 483–5. The mesne lord of the manor was Warwick, and it was acquired from his man John Sapy, who stood surety for Bredon in a separate suite concerning debt, also in 1382: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 116.

¹⁶² William appears to have been Maurice's younger brother. This branch of the Russells sometimes went under the alias of Gorges. Maurice Russell appears to have been trusted by Richard II: *HP* iv, pp. 251–3. My thanks to Dr H. Kleinke for this reference.

phase.¹⁶³ Although only a very tentative suggestion can be made concerning the causes of the dispute at Eldersfield, it may have been the result of disagreements over portions of unassarted lands which lay within the boundaries of Eldersfield but belonged to the Despenser chase at Corse. The fact that William Russell is said to have come from Corse appears to substantiate this theory.¹⁶⁴ This raises the possibility that Russell was acting on Despenser's behalf in the dispute with Bredon, and that Bredon turned to the Beauchamp affinity for support.

The dispute between Bredon and William Russell seems to have begun in early 1389 and spiralled rapidly out of control. In July 1389, the sheriff of Worcestershire was ordered to arrest Bredon and bring him before the king; since the sheriff was by definition Warwick's man, it seems unlikely that the arrest was ever made.¹⁶⁵ Further evidence of the course of the dispute is provided by the presentments of the grand jurors for Worcestershire in 1398. Although the events they describe had occurred nearly ten years previously, the evidence of Bredon's arrest in 1389 suggests that there was an element of truth in the charges. The jury said that in April 1389 a love-day had been organised at Eldersfield to impose a settlement on Russell and Bredon. According to the jury, William Russell arrived with sixty armed Welshmen and besieged the manor for half a day until the proceedings were halted. Russell then assaulted Bredon and threatened to kill him unless he came to an agreement with Russell, presumably to the latter's advantage. The fact that Russell was using Welshmen may be another clue that he was backed by Despenser, whose power base was in the Welsh Marches. Since the presentment was made in 1398 when Despenser was dominant in this region of Worcestershire, the jury may have been too frightened to implicate him directly.¹⁶⁶ During the 1390s, the situation worsened as the circle around John Russell was drawn into the dispute in support of William Russell. In 1398, two servants of John Vampage (John Russell's associate) were indicted for an attack on Eldersfield. Similarly, in 1395 Bredon brought a plea of trespass against another of John Russell's associates, the king's clerk, John Asplion.¹⁶⁷ Although the

¹⁶³ Above, pp. 152–3.

¹⁶⁴ For the lands attached to Corse, see *VCH Gloucs* VIII, pp. 274–5. The Despensers were also overlords of Eldersfield: *VCH Worcs.* IV, pp. 77–8.

¹⁶⁵ *CPR* 1388–92, p. 135; above, p. 165.

¹⁶⁶ TNA KB 27/550, *Rex*, m. 1; above, pp. 195–7; below, pp. 220–1.

¹⁶⁷ TNA KB 27/550, *Rex*, m. 6d.; CP 40/539, m. 557. In 1398, Asplion was granted the rent for life from Wyre Piddle, the reversion of which had previously been granted to Russell; was this the result of an arrangement between the two men? *CPR* 1396–9, pp. 282, 314, 39. Asplion had also come into direct conflict with Warwick: in 1390 he was co-defendant in a plea brought by the earl concerning the theft of goods from Grafton: TNA CP 40/516. He was also one of the commissioners appointed to survey Warwick's forfeited lands in 1397: *CPR* 1396–9, p. 308.

exact circumstances of the events in 1389 cannot now be determined, enough evidence survives to suggest that there was an uncontrollable dispute between Bredon, a man with connections to the Beauchamp affinity, and William Russell, who was backed by the rising powers in the region, Despenser and John Russell.

The involvement of Russell's circle in the Eldersfield dispute gives rise to the possibility that Russell was beginning to exercise his new position as a royal retainer in the county. By supporting William Russell, he exacerbated the existing ill-feeling between himself and the Beauchamp affinity. Given these already tense circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that the land dispute between Russell and Warwick concerning Earl's Croome should have become violent. In June 1392, John Russell's bailiff of Dormston, John Warde, was killed at Pershore. The men accused came from Earl's Croome and neighbouring Hill Croome.¹⁶⁸ Deed evidence indicates that some of the defendants also held land in Baughton, another portion of Warwick's land claimed by Russell.¹⁶⁹ It seems likely, therefore, that several (if not all) of those accused of the murder were Warwick's tenants. This assumption is confirmed by Warwick's actions. In the Michaelmas term of 1392 he was active as sheriff of Worcester in person, perhaps for the first time, possibly in an attempt to stifle the case and protect his tenants.¹⁷⁰ Most tellingly of all, it appears that Warwick's chief steward, Sir Nicholas Lylling, played a central part in protecting the culprits. This gave the king the perfect opportunity to act against Warwick by attacking Lylling, using a mixture of innovative legal manoeuvres and the council.

In the parliament of January 1393, John Russell, backed by the king, impeached Lylling, who was in parliament as MP for Worcestershire. Lylling was unable to answer the charges against him and was sent to Windsor Castle, where he remained for three weeks.¹⁷¹ Unfortunately, the procedural technicalities which led to Lylling's imprisonment have not survived, and no records remain of his impeachment in the parliamentary rolls. However, a record of the charges against Lylling, a statement that he was impeached and the continuation of proceedings against him before the council appear in the patent rolls.¹⁷² It is possible, of course, that the clerk responsible for writing the patent rolls was either confused or mistaken concerning the procedure used against Lylling.

¹⁶⁸ The named culprits included Richard Turberville and Richard and Geoffrey Tursteyn of Hill Croome and three men from Earl's Croome: *CPR* 1391–6, p. 269; *CCR* 1392–6, p. 50.

¹⁶⁹ In 1392, Richard Turberville leased land at Baughton: BRL 591448.

¹⁷⁰ *LEI* 9, p. 157. The evidence for this is that he even accounted in person.

¹⁷¹ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 269; *CCR* 1392–6, pp. 43, 49.

¹⁷² *CPR* 1391–6, p. 269.

But an examination of the original roll shows that the clerk used the word *impetit*, whose meaning was either ‘impeached’ or, more generally, a legal accusation. This word is used consistently and repeatedly throughout the entry. If the clerk had made a mistake, therefore, it was a continually repeated one, which suggests that the writer himself was sure of what he was writing.¹⁷³

The proceedings against Lyll yng were also unusual because technically an impeachment was a series of charges held in common by the members of parliament. Moreover, previous impeachments in 1376, 1383 and 1386 had been aimed at senior ministers within the central government, and had involved serious charges of treason, peculation and misleading the king with false counsel.¹⁷⁴ In contrast, Russell was not even an MP at the parliament of 1393, and the charges he brought against Lyll yng hardly involved high affairs of state. These circumstances highlight the extraordinary nature of Russell’s actions and demonstrate that he could only have accomplished them with the support of the king. Nevertheless, the impeachment of Lyll yng does correlate with the trend suggested by Plucknett, that the reign of Richard II saw the gradual appropriation by the crown of a procedure which had been introduced by the parliamentary Commons as a weapon to be used against royal ministers.¹⁷⁵

It is fortunate that the proceedings of *Russell v. Lyll yng* were recorded in the patent rolls, since no details of the case have survived in the records of the council. Whilst the record in the patent rolls is informative, however, it must be treated with caution. The charges against Lyll yng by Russell are laid out in three sections, and this is followed by the council’s decision to release Lyll yng under a large surety. In the close rolls, meanwhile, there appear details of Lyll yng’s mainpernors and the conditions of surety.¹⁷⁶ The patent rolls record only the *ex parte* charges made against him by Russell, and there is no record of any pleading or defence by Lyll yng.¹⁷⁷ This makes it difficult to determine the course of the dispute between Russell and Lyll yng following the murder of Russell’s bailiff.

Russell’s impeachment of Lyll yng involved three charges. The first was that, on an unspecified date and for no specified reason, Lyll yng, with 500

¹⁷³ TNA C 66/337, m. 12. D. H. Howlett (ed.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford, 1993): *impetit* is defined as either an impeachment or a legal charge. The word is actually used to mean ‘impeachment’ in a contemporary source from 1397.

¹⁷⁴ Holmes, *Good Parliament*, pp. 4–6; T. F. T. Plucknett, ‘The Origin of Impeachment’, *TRHS*, 4th ser., 24 (1942), 47–71; T. F. T. Plucknett, ‘The Impeachments of 1376’, *TRHS*, 5th ser., 1 (1951), 153–64; above, pp. 63–6, 123–4.

¹⁷⁵ T. F. T. Plucknett, ‘State Trials under Richard II’, *TRHS*, 5th ser., 2 (1952), 159–71.

¹⁷⁶ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 269; *CCR* 1392–6, pp. 113–14. Lyll yng’s mainpernors included the Beauchamp men Ailred Trussell, John Hermesthorpe and John Wodeville.

¹⁷⁷ Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, p. 151.

men armed with bows and arrows, sixty of whom were lying in ambush, had prevented Russell from returning home. This confrontation had occurred at Defford Fields, close to Strensham, so presumably Russell had been trying to reach his main seat there. When Russell asked Lylling why he was not allowed to pass, and how he was to reach his home, Lylling replied rather ambiguously that Russell could not 'if he [Russell] wanted to stay there'. The second charge stated that, although Lylling knew who was responsible for the death of Russell's bailiff, and was both chief steward of the earl of Warwick and a JP, he had not arrested them, even though the men had been indicted. The final accusation was that Lylling had arranged for the son and priest of the Lancastrian retainer John Blount to be kidnapped from Blount's house in Worcester and taken to Wales. This was allegedly in retaliation for the seizure by Blount of three of Warwick's bondmen, whom Blount had taken to Gaunt's castle at Tutbury (Staffordshire).¹⁷⁸

It is impossible now to reconstruct the chronology of events, but it is clear that southern Worcestershire had been seriously disturbed by a dispute between Russell and Blount on the one hand and the Beauchamp affinity on the other. The underlying cause of this dispute was undoubtedly the growing tension between Russell and Warwick resulting from the power struggle between royal and noble authority. Whilst Russell's claims were probably much exaggerated – the figure of 500 men given for Lylling's mob is particularly suspect – the very fact that this dispute existed at all demonstrates the extent to which the deliberate intrusion of royal power through Russell was causing serious tensions locally. Russell's one-sided version presents Lylling as the aggressor, but it is hard to believe that Russell was entirely innocent, given the behaviour of his associates in the Eldersfield dispute.¹⁷⁹ It was not only Lylling whom Russell was accusing, however. The wording of the impeachment makes it clear that Lylling was acting in a dual capacity as a JP and as Warwick's chief steward and that he had failed in both. The implication is that Lylling had not arrested the suspected murderers precisely *because* he was Warwick's retainer. Thus, the attack on Lylling was an indirect attack on the power and influence of Warwick and was a deliberate attempt to undermine the earl's position locally in almost exactly the same manner as in the case of the earl of Devon a year previously. The only difference was that Devon was directly accused; in the Lylling case, Warwick's involvement was implicit rather than explicit, but the outcome was the same.

It seems that, despite the mounting local tensions, Lylling's impeachment took Warwick by surprise. If he had been aware of such a plan in

¹⁷⁸ CPR 1391–6, p. 269. ¹⁷⁹ Above, pp. 167–70.

advance, it is unlikely that, as sheriff, he would have returned Lylling as MP for Worcestershire, thus exposing him to Lylling's enemies.¹⁸⁰ Lylling seems to have been equally unprepared, since he was unable to answer the charges. This element of surprise was deliberate. Warwick was given no opportunity to defend his man or prevent his arrest, both of which he would have been able to do under more usual circumstances. This coup must also have embarrassed Warwick on the very public stage of parliament and portrayed him as a lord unable either to protect his retainer or to keep order locally. In addition, by connecting Lylling's inaction as a JP with his role as chief steward to Warwick, the king was able to continue to play to the gallery in parliament, whilst neatly side-stepping the questionable involvement of his own retainer.

By impeaching Lylling in parliament through Russell, the king was thus able to humiliate Warwick and, by clever use of rhetoric, present himself as the champion of good order. But Richard's policy went beyond mere posturing, for the measures he took in the aftermath of the disgrace to Lylling and of the embarrassment to Warwick caused by this episode allowed him to press home his advantage at a local level, by further humiliating Warwick, and building up an alternative source of power in Worcestershire. This was done by restructuring the peace commission, the one local office in Worcestershire over which Warwick's power was not necessarily assured. On 14 March 1393, a new peace commission was issued for the county.¹⁸¹ Unlike Courtenay in Devon, Warwick himself was not removed, probably because he was only indirectly implicated in this particular affair. But Lylling was pointedly dropped from the new bench and was not employed as an officer in the West Midlands for the rest of Richard's reign. In Lylling's place was appointed Sir Richard Stury, the king's councillor and chamber knight. Stury's relationship to the 'mini-affinity' around Russell has already been described. His appointment was probably the result of his kinship to, and connections with, this group, combined with his connections with the king. Robert Russell, Sir John's illegitimate half-brother and close associate, was also included for the first time since 1390. Another newcomer was Thomas Brugge, who was linked at this time with Thomas Despenser. It is true that the Beauchamp man Alexander Besford was added, but he was rapidly removed in the following year.¹⁸² Even with the addition of Besford, the peace commission had been reshaped in such a way that Warwick

¹⁸⁰ *HP* III, pp. 603–5.

¹⁸¹ The commissioners were: Warwick, Alexander Besford, Thomas Brugge, Robert Cherlton (assize justice), Walter Cokesey (Beauchamp), John Holt (assize justice), John Rous (retained by Gaunt since 1382: above, p. 95), Robert Russell and Richard Stury: *CPR* 1391–6, p. 292.

¹⁸² For Stury, Russell and Brugge: above, pp. 152–3, 158–9.

and his men were in the minority for the first time. In June 1394, royal influence was further strengthened not just by the removal of Besford, but also by the addition of the chief baron of the exchequer, John Cassy, and of John Blount.¹⁸³

Richard also took advantage of the other source of direct royal power in Worcestershire, Feckenham Forest. In June 1393, Warwick as sheriff was ordered to elect new verderers for the forest to replace Thomas Hoddington, Alexander Besford and William Spernore, who had been removed 'for causes specially moving the king and council'.¹⁸⁴ All these men were members of the Beauchamp affinity and their election to verdererships demonstrates the extent to which Warwick's influence as sheriff permeated almost every aspect of local politics. By ordering their removal, Richard was reclaiming and curtailng some of that influence. There is no evidence that Warwick obeyed.¹⁸⁵

Richard was equally keen to drive home his advantage over Warwick through his pursuit of the alleged murderers of Russell's bailiff, John Warde. On the same day that Lyllyng was brought before the council (1 March), an order was issued to the justices of King's Bench that the appeal of murder brought by Agnes, widow of John Warde, should not be heard in Worcestershire by *nisi prius* but was to be determined in the central courts of law.¹⁸⁶ This was a very unusual step, designed to counteract any vestigial local influence Warwick might have had over the case.¹⁸⁷ The appeal first appeared in King's Bench at Easter 1393. The continuing direct royal interest in the case is reflected by the fact that nearly all of the defendants appeared, when they were committed to the Marshalsea.¹⁸⁸ What made this even more unusual was that, as a result of the king's dispute with London, the law courts had been moved to York, so that it was there, hundreds of miles from their native Worcestershire, that the defendants appeared so rapidly.¹⁸⁹ It is uncertain what means were employed to force them to come in person, and for Warwick to give them up, but, considering the circumstances, it must

¹⁸³ *CPR 1391-6*, p. 441. The commissioners were: Warwick, John Blount, John Cassy, Robert Cherlton, Walter Cokesey, John Hull, Robert Russell, Richard Stury, Richard Thurgrym (connected to the bishop of Worcester).

¹⁸⁴ *CCR 1392-6*, p. 71.

¹⁸⁵ No record survives to show that Warwick complied or of the names of verderers in subsequent years.

¹⁸⁶ *CCR 1392-6*, p. 50.

¹⁸⁷ For the development and use of the writ of *nisi prius*: Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁸⁸ TNA KB 27/528, m. 2. As Maddern shows, appeals for violent crime in King's Bench tended to bring about a higher proportion of appearances by defendants than other types of cases: Maddern, *Violence and Social Order*, pp. 112-14.

¹⁸⁹ Above, p. 142.

have been considerable, and was probably the result of the king's personal efforts. The case continued until early 1394, when Agnes Warde defaulted, whereupon the ban on the writ of *nisi prius* was lifted and the case was heard at Worcester, where, unsurprisingly, the defendants were found not guilty.¹⁹⁰ But, by this time, the king's purpose had been achieved, since it was not the fate of the defendants that was important in itself, but the demonstration of royal power over local politics in Worcestershire and his destruction of Warwick's influence there.

The final, particularly significant element of the Russell–Lyllyng dispute was the involvement of John Blount, and, through him, John of Gaunt. It has already been shown that Blount was part of the close-knit circle focused on Russell. Blount was also linked to Gaunt through his younger brother, Sir Walter Blount, who, by 1394, was Lancaster's chamberlain.¹⁹¹ That Blount looked to the Lancastrian affinity for support is confirmed by his actions when he abducted Warwick's bondmen to Tutbury.¹⁹² Since this was not part of the Lyllyng affair and Blount was not punished for his actions, it seems likely that he was acting in support of Russell. Blount may even have been escheator at the time of the abduction, or else despite this alleged offence, he was appointed shortly afterwards.¹⁹³ In either scenario, he appears to have been acting with impunity. It is unlikely, however, that Blount was acting without Lancaster's knowledge; perhaps he even had the duke's consent. The extension of Gaunt's influence into Staffordshire and Warwickshire has already been described, and it is possible that he was supporting the actions of his men against Warwick as part of the king's policy in the region.¹⁹⁴

The active involvement of the Lancastrian affinity in the Russell–Lyllyng dispute had further repercussions for the stability of the West Midlands as a whole. It appears that the tensions generated by the affair spread into Warwickshire, where they affected relations between members of the Beauchamp and Lancastrian affinities. In February 1393, Sir Ailred Trussell and Guy Spyney, two leading Beauchamp retainers, made a recognisance for £40 to Sir Walter Blount.¹⁹⁵ This may have been a bond for Trussell and Spyney to keep the peace towards Blount. It is noticeable, however,

¹⁹⁰ TNA KB 27/533, *Rex*, m. 9; KB 27/528, m. 2; *CCR* 1392–6, p. 304.

¹⁹¹ The Blounts had a history of service to the dukes of Lancaster. It may also be significant that Walter Blount had recently acquired lands around Tutbury: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 28, 223, 264, 285.

¹⁹² Above, p. 172. This apparently occurred in 1392–3; *CPR* 1391–6, p. 269. For the importance of Tutbury as a focus for the Lancastrian affinity in the midlands: above, p. 155.

¹⁹³ Blount was appointed escheator in October 1392: *List of Escheators*, p. 178; above, p. 163.

¹⁹⁴ Above, p. 151.

¹⁹⁵ *CCR* 1392–6, p. 113. Trussell also stood surety for Lyllyng in March 1393: *ibid.*, pp. 113–14.

that this was not a mutual bond; Blount was under no similar obligation to Trussell and Spyney. This apparent favouritism demonstrates the same problems with the royal affinity in the 1390s as those described by Castor for the fifteenth century. The king could not be the supreme arbiter and judge to all his subjects if he also had to consider the interests of his own retainers.¹⁹⁶ To Richard, however, this private favouritism would have been seen as part of the enhancement of his own public power.

Although Warwick had suffered a serious blow to his local standing and influence, he did not immediately submit to the new political order which the king was attempting to impose. Clearly, he decided that there was little he could do to influence the activities of the Worcestershire bench. Whilst records are tantalisingly sparse for the Worcestershire peace commissions and, where they do exist, they often do not give the names of the active JPs, some information can still be gleaned concerning who was responsible for hearing the sessions. Warwick's name is not mentioned at all. Instead, there are references to Robert Russell *et sociis suis* in June 1394, January and September 1395, May and September 1396 and June 1397,¹⁹⁷ and to John Cassy in March and June 1395, January 1396 and January 1397.¹⁹⁸ From this evidence, it appears that the running of the Worcestershire bench remained in the hands of the professional justices and lawyers who had first come to prominence in the 1380s following the loss of determining powers in 1382 and that Warwick was unable to use it to hit back at his enemies in Worcestershire.¹⁹⁹

The reason for Warwick's lack of response to Richard's encroachment through the Worcestershire peace commission can be explained by reference to the earl's alternative administrative power base, the shrievalty. After the reshaping of the peace commission in 1393–4, Warwick began, most unusually, to preside in person as sheriff at his tourn. As a court of first instance, this gave him control over presentments arising from local disputes and was therefore a method of exerting his remaining power in the county. The first reference to his activities as sheriff, noted already, coincides with the violence of the Russell–Lylyng dispute in late 1392.²⁰⁰ Between April 1394 and October 1396, the earl acted personally as sheriff on at least four more occasions and these included his first known appearance at the tourn.²⁰¹ It is possible that the patchy survival

¹⁹⁶ Above, pp. 22–3; Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*, pp. 16–19, 210–24.

¹⁹⁷ Putnam, *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, pp. 406, 413, 415; TNA C 88/70 (164); [Appendix IIB](#).

¹⁹⁸ Putnam, *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, pp. 408, 414–15; [Appendix IIB](#).

¹⁹⁹ Above, p. 110–15.

²⁰⁰ Above, p. 170.; *L&I* 9, p. 157.

²⁰¹ Warwick was active in April 1394: TNA JUST 3/180, m. 44; April 1395: *ibid.*, m. 48d.; March 1396: *CIPM* 1392–9, pp. 42–3; October 1396: TNA JUST 3/180, m. 48d.

of evidence may have skewed these data, giving a false impression of Warwick's role as sheriff and that he was using his powers before 1392, but that no references have survived to prove it. However, the evidence from the fines pages of King's Bench corroborates the theory that it was only in the 1390s that Warwick acted in person as sheriff. It must also be said that it is most unusual to find a hereditary noble sheriff acting in this way, especially in presiding over such a minor judicial forum. Before Hilary 1395, fines had been made by Warwick's deputy. But, from this date, Warwick himself sometimes paid these fines.²⁰² This strongly suggests that the earl became personally active as sheriff for the first time in the 1390s and that this was a direct result of the political pressure under which he had been placed.

In Warwickshire, as in Worcestershire, the activities of William Bagot and Richard's policy of favouring his own retainers in local disputes also led to growing local disorder. With the additional influence he gained as a conduit of royal power, Bagot's behaviour, which had always been unruly, now became even more disruptive. During the 1390s his influence spread over much of the county. This wide-ranging power was the result of Bagot's enhanced reputation as an agent of the king, as a result of which litigants looked to him for support. On the other hand, this very support often led to serious levels of violence as his opponents found that they were unable to secure a remedy at common law or through other means such as parliament or the council, and turned to violent self-help as a last resort. Since Bagot's own methods also regularly involved violence, the result was disruptive, as the case of the Aston dispute shows.

This had begun in *c.* 1379, after the death of the manor's owner Walter Holt, who was married to Margery, sister of Bagot.²⁰³ Margery and her son and heir John Holt II had a rival for the manor in the Louches family, who decided that the best way to defend the property was to lease it to someone with more influence. The Louches chose Sir John Drayton, who had links with the court through his brother William, who was a king's knight. Sir John himself was close enough to the court in 1388 to suffer temporary disgrace at the hands of the Appellants.²⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the Holts had acquired even more powerful protectors in the Lancastrian

²⁰² For example, in 1393, John Washebourne, Warwick's deputy, made fine for insufficient return of writ: TNA KB 27/528, fines section. Warwick himself paid fines for the same offence in Hilary 1395 and Easter 1397: KB 27/535, 544, fines section.

²⁰³ Above, p. 86.

²⁰⁴ *VCH Wores.* vii, p. 60. Drayton had an interest in the manor by 1382. In 1388 he lost the captaincy of Guines Castle: TNA JUST 1/1488, m. 42; *HP* ii, pp. 794–7. He was an esquire of Thomas Holland I, and was present in Richard II's army in 1399: J. L. Leland, 'The Oxford Trial of 1400: Royal Politics and the County Gentry', in Gillespie (ed.), *Age of Richard II*, pp. 167–70.

affinity, via their kinship to Bagot, who retained his links to Gaunt and Bolingbroke throughout the period. Clearly, Margery Holt did not feel secure in her possession of the manor, since, by 1396, she had enfeoffed it to Lancaster, Bagot and several other influential men.²⁰⁵ Encouraged by royal favour, and the acquiescence of Lancaster, Bagot began to take a direct interest in the dispute in this year, with predictably disruptive results.

In February 1394, John Drayton petitioned parliament. He complained that he had won an assize of novel disseisin against Margery and John Holt II, only to be dispossessed again. When Drayton attempted to bring a writ of redisseisin against them, the sheriff was menaced by a large group of men maintained by Bagot. The Lords in parliament replied that an inquiry should be held, but none was ever commissioned, and the dispute between Bagot and Drayton spiralled further out of control.²⁰⁶ In July 1394, Drayton was committed to the Tower, although it is uncertain whether his imprisonment was the result of his tactics in the Aston dispute or to violent behaviour in another context in his native Oxfordshire.²⁰⁷ In May 1396, a commission was issued to arrest John Holt, with several others from his family, and the Coleshill esquire William Mountford. In the 1380s, the custody of the underage Mountford and his lands had been granted to Bagot; Mountford may thus have been drawn into the dispute through his link to Bagot. Since one of the commissioners of arrest was the Beauchamp man Thomas Burdet, it is possible that the arrests formed part of the general attack on Bagot and his men by Warwick in 1396.²⁰⁸ But, as in 1394, there is no evidence that Bagot or his associates were punished.

Royal inaction only exacerbated the situation in north Warwickshire. In December 1396, two of Bagot's servants were murdered at Aston. Two of the most prominent members of the north Warwickshire gentry were implicated in the attack: William Bermyngeham, who was the heir to the manor of Birmingham, and Cornelius Wyrley, who was steward to the overlord of Aston, Hugh Burnell.²⁰⁹ Such was the confusion generated in the region that it is impossible to be certain what their motives were. They may have been acting on Drayton's behalf, or they may have had

²⁰⁵ Bagot was calling himself lord of Aston in 1396, which suggest the enfeoffment had taken place by then: *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 9; *CAD* vi, p. 108. Bagot's activities in 1394 suggest that he already had an interest in the manor by this date. Apart from Lancaster, the other feoffees included Guy Mone (the bishop of St David's) and Bagot's brother Sir John: TNA JUST 1/1514, m. 37d.

²⁰⁶ *RP* iii, p. 326.

²⁰⁷ Above, pp. 165–6; *CCR 1392–6*, pp. 158, 163; *HP* ii, pp. 794–7.

²⁰⁸ *CPR 1391–6*, p. 731; *HP* ii, pp. 99–103; for the links between Bagot and the Mountfords, above, pp. 85–6; for the legal attack on Bagot, below, pp. 181–4.

²⁰⁹ TNA JUST 3/188, m. 15.

their own grievances prompted by Bagot's interference in the region. In 1397, mutual recognisances between Bagot and Drayton brought a temporary truce in the dispute.²¹⁰ But, by this time, considerable damage had been done to the peace of north Warwickshire. Instead of intervening in order to impose a settlement on the feuding parties, Richard's reluctance to deal with Bagot allowed the situation to degenerate to the point where the dispute spread to other members of the gentry. Since Drayton was himself linked to the court, the consequences of Richard's misjudgement were made even worse by the fact that he was allowing disputes to develop among his own followers and loyalists, causing further rifts in the region.

The royal favour shown to Bagot, and the authority and power vested in him, also created a dispute in Coventry between royal officials and the ruling oligarchy. Since Bagot was often employed on commissions of inquiry into royal rights in the town, which had resumed in 1389, his presence must have been a constant symbol of royal intrusion into the town's affairs.²¹¹ The first sign of tension in the city was the reigniting of the feud between Bagot and John Ray of Coventry, an associate of John Catesby. In the 1380s, this dispute had led to Ray's imprisonment in the Fleet, though from 1394 he had been rehabilitated, gaining a renewal of his grant of the office of alnager.²¹² The revival of Ray's fortunes was short-lived, however. In early 1395 an anonymous letter was written to the keeper of the privy seal alleging that Ray was cheating the king of the true profits from the wool subsidy. That Bagot's name is interlineated in the list of suggested commissioners for an inquiry into Ray's activities, coupled with his previous dispute with Ray, makes it likely that it was he who was behind the anonymous letter.²¹³

The government response to the letter was not to issue a commission, but to renew the proceedings first begun in the 1380s in the *Rex* side of King's Bench against Ray for corruption and extortion.²¹⁴ Meanwhile, Bagot's intrusive presence in Coventry affairs led him into direct confrontation with the ruling oligarchy in the town. According to the indictments brought against Bagot's associates in 1395–6, in September 1395 Bagot allegedly led a conspiracy to besiege Coventry. His co-defendants included his Coventry- and Staffordshire-based associate Adomar Lichfeld and a royal clerk of the king's manor of

²¹⁰ CCR 1396–9, p. 128.

²¹¹ For example, Bagot was appointed to commissions of inquiry into waste at Cheylesmore (February 1389), concealment of lands belonging to the king in the town (June 1395) and to seize the heir of Ralph Hunt (November 1392): CPR 1388–92, p. 52; CPR 1391–6, pp. 234, 592.

²¹² Above, pp. 117–18; CFR 1391–9, p. 124. ²¹³ TNA SC 1/57/8.

²¹⁴ TNA KB 27/537, *Rex*, m. 19d.

Cheylesmore, Thomas Quynnton.²¹⁵ From further afield, John Goldsmyth of Birmingham, who was also a supporter of the Holts in the Aston dispute, rode to Coventry to take part in the alleged siege with eleven other men.²¹⁶ Such was Bagot's local influence that, initially, the indictments made before the Coventry JPs in December 1395 did not mention his involvement, although Lichfeld and Goldsmyth were both accused. But between December 1395 and May 1396, word of Bagot's activities reached the government, and a commission was issued to deal with them.²¹⁷ The timing of this commission coincides with Warwick's decision to act against Bagot directly, which was made in early 1396.²¹⁸ Perhaps the eventual inclusion of Bagot's name in the list of trouble-makers in Coventry indicted before the Coventry JPs was encouraged by Warwick as part of his attempt to defend his increasingly precarious position. However, as we shall see, the commissioners' powers were substantially curtailed.

This seems to be the period in which the peace commissions were first used extensively for political purposes, as the example of Richard's actions in Worcestershire and Devon shows.²¹⁹ Similarly, and in retaliation, Warwick now did the same in Warwickshire. The earl had not succumbed immediately to Richard's attempts to undermine his local position, and his main method of countering royal policy in Warwickshire was through the peace commission. It seems that Richard had not seen the need to reshape the Warwickshire peace commission because he already had sufficient control through the shrievalty and escheatorship.²²⁰ Perhaps Warwick took his cue to use his role as JP to attack his opponents from the king's own policy of politicising the county benches in counties such as Worcestershire and Devon. From late 1391, the earl began to sit as a JP in Warwickshire on a regular basis. He was present at sessions in October 1391, April 1392 and April 1393.²²¹ Since there are gaps in the records of the sessions, it is possible that he may have been present on other occasions too. From September 1395 to July 1396, Warwick was again regularly in attendance.²²² Unfortunately, after this, the references to the JPs dry up until April 1398.²²³ Despite the tantalising gaps, some conclusions can still

²¹⁵ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 76–8. For Quynnton, see *CCR* 1389–92, p. 112; for Lichfeld: above, p. 157, n. 103.

²¹⁶ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 77–8. Goldsmyth's involvement in the Aston dispute went back to at least 1382: TNA JUST 1/1488, m. 37.

²¹⁷ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 731. ²¹⁸ Below, pp. 184–5.

²¹⁹ Above, pp. 166–7, 173–4. ²²⁰ Above, pp. 161–2.

²²¹ TNA KB 9/173/1, mm. 12–13; C 258/29 (38).

²²² TNA C 88/70 (85, 89) (September 1395); KB 9.176, mm. 13, 76, 8–9 (March, May and July 1396).

²²³ Appendix IIA.

be drawn. In comparison to the period 1374–89, Warwick's appearances as a JP in Warwickshire in the 1390s were far more frequent.²²⁴ In the context of the rise of the royal affinity in the region and the exclusion of the Beauchamp affinity from local office, his activities as a JP take on an added significance. Just as he was using his office of hereditary sheriff in Worcestershire, so in Warwickshire he was using the peace commission in order to resist increasing royal intervention in his power base.

As a JP, on 3 October 1391, Warwick and his fellows heard indictments against Adam Sampson for the death of Thomas Souter at Newton on Dunsmore on 8 July 1391. Clearly this was a case which was taken seriously by the JPs since six out of the nine men appointed to the bench were present. In April 1392, another two men, Thomas and Henry Hendeman, were indicted for the same murder, also before Warwick.²²⁵ The records of King's Bench reveal that the murder was the result of a dispute between Souter and Hendeman but why did Warwick take such a personal interest in the case?²²⁶ The answer to this question can be found in the indictments made against William Bagot before Warwick and other JPs in March 1396. On this occasion, a direct link was made between Bagot and the Hendemans. The jurors said that Bagot had protected the Hendemans at Baginton after a second murder in 1395.²²⁷ Although there is no surviving evidence of a direct link between Bagot and the Hendemans apart from the indictments, there is circumstantial evidence to support this accusation. The Hendemans came from Stretton, very near Bagot's own power base at Baginton; both the murders also took place in the same region.²²⁸ Similarly, the Hendemans' sudden appearance in the legal records coincides with Bagot's rise in the 1390s; after his fall, they cease to appear once more.²²⁹

Warwick's first attack on Bagot in 1391 targeted the latter's associates, rather than Bagot himself. But by 1396 the situation had become much more serious for the earl. The Russell-Lylling dispute had damaged his

²²⁴ Appendix IIA.

²²⁵ TNA KB 9/173/1, mm. 12–13; Appendix IIA.

²²⁶ There was a series of suits and counter-suits between the Souters and the Hendemans in the period before and after the murder: TNA KB 27/523, m. 29; KB 27/531, m. 30d., CP 40/523, mm. 231, 542.

²²⁷ TNA KB 9/176, m. 176.

²²⁸ The first murder took place at Newton-upon-Dunsmore, the second at Clifton-upon-Dunsmore: TNA KB 27/529, m. 17; KB 27/541, *Rex*, m. 26.

²²⁹ The Hendemans appear to have come from the rank just below gentry status who served on juries and as tax collectors; in 1383, Roger Hendeman was empanelled as a juror: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 314–15. Although it was not the first time that they had been in trouble (William Hendeman had been implicated in a previous murder in 1379: TNA KB 27/475, *Rex*, m. 4d.), their status makes their rise to prominence in the 1390s inexplicable unless it is linked to Bagot's growing power.

influence in Worcestershire, whilst in Warwickshire most of the local offices were in the hands of Mowbray's or Lancaster's men.²³⁰ Meanwhile, Bagot's power had grown unabated and it seems that Warwick had now decided to accuse Bagot directly, perhaps in an attempt to bring the latter's activities to the king's notice and so precipitate his fall, perhaps in a last effort to assert the remnants of his local influence. It appears that the initial legal actions against Bagot may have been brought before the Warwick assizes in February 1396. According to the indictments heard by the JPs in the following month, Bagot and all his *familia* had ridden to the Warwick assizes in arms. One of Bagot's men, William Swetenham, then assaulted Warwick's retainer, Robert Walden, in the presence of the justices.²³¹ Even allowing for *ex parte* exaggeration, it seems that Bagot's open disregard for a court of law led directly to Warwick's decision to deal with him personally, rather than at one remove, at the next quarter sessions.

In March, May and July 1396 the quarter sessions were concerned with hearing indictments against Bagot and his chief associates John Bray of Stretton and William Ilshawe. Warwick himself was present with other JPs who were members of his affinity.²³² The first set of indictments in March are the longest, whilst the second set seem to be an afterthought, adding two extra indictments for murder and a series of accusations against Bagot's servant John atte Halle to the long list of crimes already ascribed to Bagot and Bray. Those in July were directed against Ilshawe.²³³ Both the nature and the chronology of the indictments are very interesting although they cannot be taken entirely at face value since they relate mainly to incidents that were alleged to have occurred more than a decade previously. We can only surmise that some may have had a kernel of truth, but were embroidered by the jurors to portray Bagot in the worst possible light. The importance of the charges lies not in their truth, however, but both in the manner in which they were brought – by Warwick and his affinity as JPs – and against whom – the chief representative of the royal affinity in Warwickshire.

Many of the indictments date from the period during which Bagot was sheriff and John Bray under-sheriff, from 1382 to 1384.²³⁴ The largest group relate to five charges of falsification of indictments at the tourn in return for a bribe. It is impossible to know whether Bagot was guilty of

²³⁰ Above, pp. 161–2.

²³¹ TNA KB 27/541, *Rex*, m. 26; Swetenham was also involved in the Coventry affair: above, p. 157, n. 101.

²³² On 13 March they were: John Catesby, William Purfrey, Thomas Purfrey: TNA KB 9/176, m. 13d. (badly faded) and m. 175. On 25 May, Robert Burgulon was also present: TNA KB 9/176, m. 13. The charges are amalgamated at TNA KB 27/541, *Rex*, m. 26.

²³³ TNA KB 9/176, mm. 58–9. ²³⁴ Above, pp. 116–18.

these charges. There are no surviving records from the sheriff's tourn for the period and no contemporary references in other records to support the charges. Possibly the accusations may suggest that Bagot had run a lucrative racket as sheriff, possibly not. However, perhaps the most significant feature of these indictments is the emphasis on Baginton as the centre for Bagot's illegal activities. It was alleged that each of his victims was imprisoned there until they made fine.²³⁵ This is a feature which also looms large in the other charges against him.

Another charge relating to Bagot's activities as sheriff involves the curious tale of one William Smyth of Catesby (Northamptonshire). According to the jurors, in August 1382, whilst Bagot was sheriff, he ordered men of his livery to deceive Smyth 'through flattering speeches' to leave his native county for Warwickshire. Once in Warwickshire, Smyth was forcibly taken to Baginton, where he was made to pay a fine of £20 for his release. As a result of his experiences, the unfortunate Smyth then died. Even though the date of this incident was actually before Bagot's term as sheriff began, the significance of this accusation lies in Smyth's provenance. John Catesby, who was one of the JPs at the indictments, held land at Catesby, and Smyth may have been connected to him; perhaps he was even Catesby's tenant. The date of 1382 coincides with the start of the feud between Bagot and Catesby and, whatever the actual truth behind the indictment, its inclusion in the proceedings before the JPs reflects the long-running dispute between the two men.²³⁶

The rest of the indictments refer to incidents after Bagot's term as sheriff and cover the period from June 1386 to February 1396. These included Bagot's alleged maintenance of the Hendemans following the Norton murder and the assault on Robert Walden at the 1396 assizes.²³⁷ Other charges included two counts of maintaining murderers at Baginton in 1386 and 1391. In addition Bagot himself was accused of the murder of John Smyth of Chester. It was alleged that Bagot and Bray had killed him at Baginton in June 1389. No record of these deaths, or of Bagot's involvement in them, has come to light but the reference to a Cheshireman may have been an attempt to appeal to the king's well-known liking for the region. It may also be linked to the fact that Bagot had been granted the lordship of Middlewich (Cheshire) in 1389. Finally, Bagot's servant John atte Halle was accused of a series of thefts in 1390

²³⁵ Above, pp. 116, 157. TNA KB 27/541, *Rex*, m. 26. Each of Bagot's victims was a cleric. It was alleged that each had been indicted for felony at the sheriff's tourn and was imprisoned at Baginton until they paid a fine. These charges remain something of a mystery, since it is not apparent why clerics, who would have been saved from hanging by their cloth, should have paid these fines.

²³⁶ TNA KB 27/541, *Rex*, m. 26; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 290; above, pp. 115–18.

²³⁷ Discussed above, pp. 181–2.

and Bagot of receiving him at Baginton. Again, there is no other contemporary evidence to support these claims. The indictments against Bagot and Bray made while Warwick presided were then followed with further charges against Bagot's associate, William Ilshawe, at another session where the earl was the senior justice. In July 1396, there were indictments against Ilshawe for the theft of a silver goblet from Nicholas Warrewyk in 1392. Warrewyk was another man with long-standing links to the earl and it is possible that he connived in bringing the charges against Ilshawe, especially since this incident had happened several years previously but had not been mentioned before.²³⁸

Since Warwick's attack on Bagot at the quarter sessions coincided with the issue of a governmental commission relating to the troubles at Coventry in September 1395, the earl may also have been instrumental in informing the centre about Bagot's activities.²³⁹ But, if Warwick was hoping for a hostile commission of oyer and terminer to investigate Bagot's activities, he was to be disappointed. The commission was not given the authority to inquire into the siege or to punish the culprits. Instead, it was to summon both sides to Banbury to hear their grievances and to impose a peaceful settlement. The commissioners possessed powers of arrest limited to apprehending any person who refused to come. Whilst this may have been an attempt by the government to take the heat out of the situation through arbitration, from Warwick's point of view the commission would have appeared to have lacked judicial teeth. Worse, none of the commissioners were natives of Warwickshire, and all had close connections to the king and his council. They included Thomas Lord Percy (later earl of Worcester) and the royal councillors Sir Richard Adderbury and Lawrence Drew.²⁴⁰ Thus, although the original complaint against Bagot may have been hostile, the hostility was negated by the likely sympathies of the commissioners and the limited powers they were given. Such was Richard's support of Bagot that, when new indictments concerning the Coventry affair were heard before the JPs to coincide with the commission, even though he was named as the instigator of the conspiracy, no other action was taken against him.²⁴¹ When the case was heard in King's Bench sessions at

²³⁸ TNA KB 9/176, m. 59; [Appendix II A](#). It is somewhat suspicious that two of the murder victims have the same surname, Smyth. Of course, the surname may be a convenient one to cover lapses in memory or lack of knowledge amongst the presenting jurors. For Bagot's emergence in Cheshire, see King, 'Richard II, Shropshire and the Northern March', p. 66.

²³⁹ Above, pp. 179–80.

²⁴⁰ *CPR* 1391–6, p. 731; *HP* II, pp. 12–15, 797–800; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 180–1. The full commission was: Richard Adderbury, Lawrence Drew, John Lovell, Thomas Percy, William Wilicotes (assize justice).

²⁴¹ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 76–7.

Coventry in October 1397, the results were similar; the indictment of 1396 was used but Bagot was not punished.²⁴²

The indictments against Bagot heard before Warwick as JP also met with a similar governmental response. The charges against Bagot were removed almost immediately to King's Bench. The record from Trinity Term states that on 8 July Bagot appeared at the Marshalsea and declared his innocence. In late January 1397, whilst King's Bench was at Lincoln, a jury was produced from Warwickshire which found Bagot not guilty.²⁴³ Considering the close relationship between Bagot and the king, and Richard's apparent determination to support his own men even at the cost of local disorder, this outcome is hardly surprising and contrasts sharply with the treatment meted out to Warwick and his men. Warwick had made a final, desperate attempt to reassert his local power against an intrusive and apparently disruptive royal authority but the lenient treatment of Bagot indicated Richard's attitude towards the earl. Richard had no intention of withdrawing royal power and influence channelled through his affinity. Indeed, by the summer of 1396, the king was preparing Warwick's final downfall and Warwick was in no position to defend either himself or his men. His weakness had indeed already been seen in October 1395, when Thomas Burdet and Guy Spyney were appealed in King's Bench for the murder of John Dekene at Aston Cantlow. Dekene himself appears to have been a very minor figure, so the fact that his wife was able to accuse two of Warwick's men suggests that Warwick's influence was fading fast.²⁴⁴ The attack on Bagot in 1395–6 represented the earl's last throw of the dice, brought about by Richard's rule in the West Midlands and, as we shall now see, by his fears concerning the safety of his own landed property. Unfortunately for the earl, he failed.

In October 1396, the final stage of Richard's campaign against Warwick had begun when Thomas Mowbray brought a plea of error in King's Bench concerning the judgement which had given the Beauchamps the lordship of Gower in south-west Wales. Gower was vulnerable to royal intervention, because of an ancient claim by the English king to overlordship. In 1354, Edward III had made an arbitrary award of the lordship in King's Bench to Thomas Beauchamp I.²⁴⁵ Thomas Beauchamp II inherited Gower uncontested as we have seen, but, from 1382 there

²⁴² TNA KB 27/546, *Rex*, m. 15.

²⁴³ TNA KB 27/541, *Rex*, m. 26. Initially, Bagot did not even appear when he was supposed to.

²⁴⁴ TNA KB 27/538, m. 16. It has not been possible to identify Dekene, but he was probably not a member of the gentry. For Burdet and Spyney, see [Appendix 1](#).

²⁴⁵ TNA KB 27/542, m. 64; Davies, *Lordship and Society*, pp. 30–1; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 25–31; Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 15–20; above, p. 40.

were periodic clashes with the king concerning the conflicting rights of the earl and the bishop of Llandaff in the manor of Bishopston within the lordship. On each occasion, Richard had intervened on behalf of the bishop or his chapter.²⁴⁶

When Mowbray instituted proceedings against Warwick for Gower in 1396, therefore, the previous history of the lordship dictated that he could do so only with the king's approval and support. There are several reasons why Richard should choose to launch an attack on Warwick at this point. First, Warwick's position locally was so weakened by late 1396 that he was no longer indispensable to the running of local government. As a result, Richard may already have begun to consider how he might remove Warwick before the earl's resentment led to further rebellion, especially since, in his attack on Bagot, Warwick had already shown signs of putting up a fight. Second, Richard was probably well aware that much of the Appellants' military strength in 1387 had been drawn from the highly militarised Marcher region. Since that date, the Beauchamps' potential power in Wales had been augmented through Sir William Beauchamp's inheritance of the lordship of Bergavenny. Although William, a member of the royal household, had not always sided with his brother, his actions in 1386–8 had shown that he might do so in a crisis.²⁴⁷ The vulnerability of Gower to royal interference, therefore, gave the king the opportunity to remove one potential source of power from his opponents. Finally, the resettlement of Gower was a test of Richard's own ability to impose his policies without precipitating an adverse reaction.

The proceedings concerning Gower in 1396–7 made it abundantly clear both that Warwick was no longer able to defend himself from royal encroachments on his authority and that Richard was intent on bringing about the earl's final downfall. In the parliament of January 1397, in which Haxey's bill was presented, Warwick was asked to explain why he had entered Bishopston in Gower during a vacancy in the bishopric of Llandaff, in contempt of the king and in derogation of the crown. Warwick's only excuse was that his ancestors had always done the same and he was forced to put himself on the king's grace. Richard ordered that Warwick repay the issues that he had taken from the manor and that he make fine for his contempt.²⁴⁸ This incident was probably engineered by the king in order to test Warwick's reactions and to embarrass him

²⁴⁶ Above, pp. 97, 121.

²⁴⁷ Davies, *Lordship and Society*, pp. 51–2 and 272–86 for the potential political and military significance of the Marcher region; Jack, 'Hastings Inheritance', pp. 10–12; above, pp. 54–5, 131–2.

²⁴⁸ *RP* III, p. 341.

publicly. Once he saw that Warwick could no longer defend himself, a final judgement could be reached on Gower.

In June 1397, King's Bench awarded Gower to Mowbray and a crippling settlement was imposed on Warwick. He was ordered to repay the profits, worth £5,333 6s 8d, over a period of ten years. In order to ensure that Warwick adhered to these payments, he was made to enfeoff seventeen manors (five in Warwickshire, five in Buckinghamshire, four in Rutland, two in Northamptonshire and one in Worcestershire) to Mowbray's agents. If Warwick failed to make the regular payments required of him, or if he challenged the feoffment, then he was to lose the properties for good. Warwick and his brother Sir William were also forced to quitclaim Gower to Mowbray in perpetuity and to waive any future attempt at recovery.²⁴⁹

Although the loss of Gower was a financial blow to Warwick, the sequestration of the seventeen manors, many of which lay in the heartland of the Beauchamp inheritance, was much more serious. Given-Wilson has pointed out that the Warwickshire manors taken from Warwick fitted perfectly with Mowbray's existing lands in the county.²⁵⁰ Undoubtedly, this was the king's intention. Since 1389, with the king's support, Mowbray's influence in the county had expanded. Richard was well aware of the power that land bestowed and, with Mowbray's advice, was planning to redistribute it to his own advantage. The June settlement was, in fact, a dress rehearsal for the dispersal of the Beauchamp inheritance in the summer and autumn of 1397. On 10 July, Richard began his coup; Warwick, Gloucester and Arundel were summoned to meet the king, though only Warwick appeared. After a meal, he was escorted to the Tower, where he became the king's prisoner, and his final downfall began.²⁵¹

The evidence from the West Midlands demonstrates that Richard was not 'frightened into tyranny'.²⁵² From his return to power in 1389 he had followed a consistent policy of undermining Warwick in the West Midlands and eventually in the Marches whilst building up his own support. Warwick's fall, when it came, was the result of at least a year of careful planning. Richard left nothing to chance in his coup. Both the shrievalty and escheatorship of Warwickshire were in the hands of Mowbray's men, and the shrievalty of Worcestershire was rapidly seized

²⁴⁹ CCR 1396–9, pp. 123–4. The Warwickshire manors were: Brailes, Tanworth, Berkswell, Lighthorne and Moreton Morrell; the Worcestershire manor was Yardley.

²⁵⁰ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 45–9; Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, pp. 136–7. See Figure 5.

²⁵¹ *Annales*, pp. 201–2; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 137–8.

²⁵² Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', pp. 17–18.

and granted by the king to Henry Haggeley.²⁵³ Equally, Warwick's experience makes it unlikely that the former Appellants were involved in a new plot against the king which forced Richard to make an unpremeditated strike against them. This theory of a new plot has been based on the evidence of the proclamation made on 15 July that the arrests were not connected to the events of 1387–8 but to new plots against the king; on Warwick's confession in parliament, which referred to his involvement with the opposition to the king; and on the interpretations of the French chroniclers.²⁵⁴ However, not only is it clear from Richard's dealings in the West Midlands in the 1390s that he was intending to attack Warwick well in advance of this date, the evidence for a new plot requires reassessment. First, no English chronicler mentions a new plot, and they were generally better informed than the French. Second, the proclamation made by the king was to quell the possibility of rebellion by the former supporters of the Appellants, including the members of the Merciless Parliament, who feared that, if Richard had arrested his opponents for their actions in 1386–8, they too could be punished. Finally, there is a complete absence of any reference to a new plot in the counter-appeal of 1397; the charges related solely to the events of 1386–8. Similarly, Warwick's 'confession' is ambiguous; it probably referred to his involvement in the Appellant opposition to Richard rather than to any new plot.²⁵⁵

There is one other interpretational problem with the events of July 1397. If Warwick was aware of the king's intentions towards him, why did he obey the summons to a meeting with Richard in London when both Gloucester and Arundel were suspicious and immured themselves in their castle strongholds? Possibly, Warwick was not in a position to refuse the king. Not only may Gloucester and Arundel have been less weakened by Richard's policies, or more determined to resist him, but also Warwick was growing old and the loss of Gower and his inability to bring Bagot to justice had shown him that there was nothing he could do in the face of Richard's will. It may also be that Warwick suspected that his fall was inevitable and followed a policy of co-operation in order to lessen the blow both to himself and to his teenage son. In the short term, this led to

²⁵³ The sheriff of Warwickshire was Robert Goushill, the escheator Hugh Dalby: *LEI* 9, pp. 145, 157; *List of Escheators*, p. 169. Haggeley came from the north Warwickshire–Worcestershire region, where he held land at Hagley: *VCH Wors.* III, pp. 132–3. He may also be synonymous with the Henry Haggeley who turned king's approver in 1394: TNA KB 27/531, *Rex*, m. 11. In December 1397 he received a pardon for the forfeit of goods following his outlawry for this murder: *CPR* 1396–9, p. 268.

²⁵⁴ *CCR* 1396–9, p. 208; Fletcher, *Richard II*, pp. 249–58. The argument for a new plot has been put forward most strongly in Mott, 'Richard II's Relations with his Magnates', pp. 20–5.

²⁵⁵ *RP* III, pp. 376–80, 436; J. J. N. Palmer, 'The Authorship, Date and Historical Value of the French Chronicles of the Lancastrian Revolution: II', *BJRL*, 61 (1979), pp. 402–3.

his personal humiliation and downfall but in the longer term his policy paid off both in his personal survival and in the restoration of the family fortunes in the next reign.²⁵⁶

By July 1397, therefore, Richard had succeeded in destroying his three principal enemies. Whatever Richard's motives between 1389 and 1397, the evidence from the West Midlands suggests very strongly that the end result was premeditated. A final decision to remove Warwick completely was made in mid 1396, after the earl's attack on Bagot. By this time, Richard had achieved a twenty-eight-year truce with France, and may have decided that, once the external threat from France had been negated, he could concentrate on what he perceived to be the internal one.²⁵⁷ This should not be taken to mean that Richard had not planned the destruction of Warwick's influence before this date, however. The attack on Warwick, through his main local power base, had begun in 1389, almost as soon as Richard was back in power. But although in the summer of 1397 the king appeared to have achieved all his objectives, his policies carried with them the seeds of his final downfall. The intrusive presence and apparent immunity from prosecution of the royal affinity in the West Midlands had already caused the escalation of disputes at Aston and Coventry and created entirely new ones in southern Worcestershire. In addition, Warwick himself may have been removed but it was impossible to stifle every member of his affinity. The next chapter will show that, from 1397 to 1399, Richard's policies served only to strengthen the bonds amongst the men opposed to him and to alienate others, so that in 1399 it was the Beauchamp affinity which played an important role in Bolingbroke's successful invasion.

²⁵⁶ Below, pp. 193–8. ²⁵⁷ Above, pp. 181–5.

Chapter 5

1397–1401

According to Walsingham, in the summer of 1397 Richard II began to tyrannise his people. Walsingham says that the king's tyranny took several forms: control over parliament; disregard of custom and common law alike; his misuse of blank charters; his manipulation of the role of the council to intimidate and punish his subjects; and the atmosphere of fear and suspicion which his policies aroused.¹ Despite Walsingham's condemnation of Richard's rule, we have seen that recent revisionism has tended to view him in a more positive light and even explain his deposition as the result of bad luck and political naivety rather than because he was a tyrant. Given-Wilson has argued that although Richard's policies had begun to alienate the gentry members of his affinity, many still attempted to raise troops in his support in July 1399 because the king was delayed in Ireland and could not lead his affinity in person. As for the magnates, Given-Wilson suggests that the majority stayed loyal to Richard in 1399; it was only the earls of Westmorland and Northumberland who broke ranks.² But, as the previous chapter has shown, many of these policies which Given-Wilson associates with the last years of Richard's reign had already been introduced from 1389 and were causing disruption locally even before the coup of 1397. In the light of this evidence, is it really possible to conclude that Richard's deposition was neither inevitable nor deserved? When the assumptions on which the revisionists' arguments are based with reference to Richard's last two years are examined more closely it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain their interpretation.

This version of the tyranny and Richard's fall rests on two assumptions: first, that sources for the period such as Walsingham's chronicles

¹ *Annales Ricardi Secundi*, p. 199.

² Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 217–26, 267. For a list of men who raised troops for Richard and Bolingbroke in 1399 see *Chronicles of the Revolution*, pp. 250–3; Barron, 'Deposition of Richard II', pp. 132–3, 135–6. For the historiographical context of these arguments: above, pp. 10–11.

were biased in favour of the Lancastrians, and, second, that Richard's rule did not have the negative impact on political society that some historians have supposed. It is true that most English chronicle sources cannot be relied on entirely, since they themselves were based on government propaganda. Two fairly reliable sources, Knighton's chronicle and the Westminster Chronicle, peter out in 1395 and 1394 respectively, whilst much of Walsingham's account of the 1390s was coloured by hindsight and highly influenced by Lancastrian propaganda, particularly the 'Record and Process'. This presented Richard's rule in the worst possible light to justify his deposition and Henry's accession. Clearly, it was widely diffused, since it appears in several chronicles, including Walsingham's, Usk's and the monk of Evesham's.³ But if these chronicles all have an inherent bias, neither is it clear that the sources used in the revisionist view of Richard's reign are any more reliable. For example, the three Cistercian chronicles of Dieulacres, Whalley and Kirkstall were in the Duchy of Lancaster. Dieulacres was actually under Lancaster's direct patronage.⁴ It is possible that Lancaster's support for Richard in the 1390s may have encouraged the chroniclers to write more positively about Richard's reign. In addition, after February 1399, when the Lancastrian lands were sequestrated, it is unlikely that these chroniclers would write anything unflattering at all about Richard's rule.⁵ The Dieulacres chronicler was even more likely to favour Richard, because the king, as earl of Chester, was patron of the abbey. Indeed, as Given-Wilson has shown, the first Dieulacres chronicler, who was active up to c. 1400, was amongst

³ A. Gransden, 'Propaganda in English Medieval Historiography', *JMH*, 1 (1975), pp. 367–8; A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II, c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982), pp. 123–6, 136–44, 157–60, 187–8; C. Given-Wilson, 'Adam Usk, the Monk of Evesham and the Parliament of 1397–8', *Historical Research*, 66 (1993), pp. 334–5; *Chronicles of the Revolution*, pp. 3–6; J. Taylor, 'Richard II in the Chronicles', in Goodman and Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, pp. 16–19. The trend of questioning the veracity of these accounts began with the work of Sayles, who attacked Walsingham's version of events: 'too much credit is still accorded to tales that are improbable and without warrant': G. O. Sayles, 'King Richard II – a Fresh Look', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 115 (1971), 28–31, repr. in *Scripta Diversa* (London, 1981) this has recently been continued in D. Biggs, *Three Armies in Britain: The Irish Campaign of Richard II and the Usurpation of Henry IV, 1397–99* (Brill, 2006), esp. pp. 2–6, 42–4, 86, and G. B. Stow, 'Richard II in the *Continuatio Eulogii*: Yet Another Alleged Hysterical Incident?', in N. Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England v* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 116–29. For a more balanced survey of the chronicle evidence, see A. K. McHardy, *The Reign of Richard II: From Minority to Tyranny 1377–97*, ed. A. K. McHardy (Manchester, 2012), pp. 10–15.

⁴ M. V. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', *BJRL*, 14 (1930), 125–55; *Dieulacres Chronicle*, ed. M. V. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, *BJRL*, 14 (1930), 125–81; M. V. Clarke, 'The Kirkstall Chronicle, 1355–1400', in *Fourteenth Century Studies*, pp. 99–101; Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, pp. 259–60. Given-Wilson also makes this point about Kirkstall: *Chronicles of the Revolution*, p. 7.

⁵ Below, pp. 195, 208.

the most pro-Ricardian of all the commentators of the period.⁶ It would have been very unwise of the chronicler to be critical of the abbey's patron. Similarly, the French accounts of Richard's deposition present their own problems. Although the most important of these accounts, by John Créton, has some eyewitness details, Créton was also writing to a political agenda. The French feared that the new Henrician regime might resume the war, whilst Richard's pro-French and peaceable policy appealed to French writers, all the more so as he was married to a French princess. Thus, Créton's pro-Ricardian stance must be seen in the context of the distrust felt in the French court concerning Henry's motives.⁷

If none of the contemporary or near-contemporary chronicles can be trusted completely, is it possible to argue that Richard was really no more deserving of deposition than any other medieval king? Apart from the chronicle evidence, the argument that Richard was merely unlucky is based on the fact that some members of his affinity did respond to his call to arms but were let down by York's feeble leadership. If Richard had been there in person, the argument goes, then Bolingbroke might have met with more resistance.⁸ There are, however, two important flaws in this argument, which are linked to a misconception of how the medieval polity operated. First of all, what little support Richard was able to muster in 1399 melted away without a fight. The fact that there was no real opposition to Bolingbroke's invasion suggests that it had widespread tacit support.⁹ Second, there is the inescapable fact that Richard was deposed without any kind of military confrontation. As the discussions of the Appellants in 1387 show, deposition was viewed as a last resort, to deal with a king whose rule was intolerable, not with one whose policies were merely unpopular.¹⁰ Moreover, as Barron herself has shown in her earlier account of the period, many of the charges made against Richard in 1399 were not fictitious. Rather, they are corroborated by the records of the councils, the enormous roll of general pardons, the blank charters used to extort money and the king's insistence on the sheriffs' oaths of loyalty, to

⁶ Clarke and Galbraith, 'Deposition of Richard II', pp. 55–9; *Chronicles of the Revolution*, pp. 9–10. The pro-Ricardian writer was replaced by a pro-Henry one in c. 1400.

⁷ Créton was in England in 1399 and an eyewitness to Richard's expedition to Ireland, although he may not have been at the meeting between Northumberland and Richard at Conway Castle in August 1399: Palmer, 'French Chronicles', pp. 413–21; J. A. Tuck, 'Henry IV and Europe', in Britnell and Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy*, pp. 107–10; C. Taylor, "'Weep thou for me in France': French Views of the Deposition of Richard II', in Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* III, pp. 207–8, 214–18.

⁸ Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 223–6; Barron, 'Deposition of Richard II', pp. 136–7.

⁹ *Annales Monasterii Sancti Albani a Johanne Amundesham*, ed. H. T. Riley (2 vols., RS, 1870–1), pp. 243–8; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 151–6; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 213–17.

¹⁰ Above, pp. 30–1, 132–3. For a similar dilemma in the fifteenth century: Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 263–4.

ensure that they would imprison anyone found conspiring against him. Such was the extent and threatening nature of these methods that even the author of the most pro-Ricardian of the contemporary accounts, the Dieulacres chronicler, was moved to write critically about them.¹¹ Most important of all, Richard met the medieval criteria for a tyrant because he ruled solely according to his own will and without reference to his subjects' wishes whilst disregarding the common law and customs which protected their lives and property. This meant that no man could consider himself safe. Henry IV had no need to fabricate charges against Richard, and little difficulty in securing his deposition, which, by 1399, had become the only possible means of dealing with him.¹² This chapter will examine the impact and nature of Richard's tyranny from the perspective of West Midlands political society and will aim to answer some important questions: how did the lordless Beauchamp affinity react to their situation? How did the new magnates installed by Richard respond to their roles? And could Richard's policies ever have worked within the medieval polity, or were they always doomed to failure?

After the arrest of the former Appellants in July 1397, the next stage in the process of their destruction was the counter-appeal in the parliament summoned in September. Following Gloucester's 'confession' and murder at Calais, Arundel and Warwick were tried in parliament by counter-appeal, in direct imitation of the events of 1388.¹³ Arundel attempted to defend himself against a parliament packed with the king's supporters. Although his cry of 'where are the faithful commons?' has sometimes been assumed to be rhetorical, the evidence from the West Midlands at least shows that the returns to parliament in September 1397 were both influenced and dominated by the royal affinity.¹⁴ The king's experiences

¹¹ *Chronicles of the Revolution*, pp. 30–1; above, pp. 191–2.

¹² McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 487–98; Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', pp. 2–14, 17–18; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 194–210, 224–5; U. Graßnick, "'O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable': The Deposition of Richard II and Mirrors for Princes", in J. S. Hamilton (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* IV (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 159–74, argues that the language of 'mirrors for princes' is echoed in the political dialectic of the deposition articles.

¹³ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, p. 226; RP III, pp. 377–9; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 189–90; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 378–9.

¹⁴ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana* II, pp. 224–5; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 142–4; *Chronicon Adae de Usk*, ed. E. M. Thompson (London, 1904), pp. 152–8; RP III, pp. 347–51, 372. For the assumption that parliament was not packed, see McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 479–83 and esp. pp. 486–7; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 187–91; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 375–81. For the opposing view see Astill, 'Leicestershire Society', pp. 146–7. The sheriff of Warwickshire in 1397 was Mowbray's retainer Robert Goushill. The shrievalty of Worcestershire was seized by the king, who appointed Henry Hageley in July 1397. Goushill returned William Bagot and the lawyer Thomas Crewe. Hageley returned John Russell and the Despenser man Richard Ruyhall II: *L&I* 9, pp. 145, 147; *HP* I, pp. 664–5, 719. Dodd's work on Richard's parliaments supports this point: G. Dodd, 'Richard II and the Transformation of Parliament', in Dodd (ed.), *The Reign of Richard II*, pp. 74–7, 80–1, 84.

with parliament in the years leading up to the crisis of 1386–8 had taught him the value of managing the Commons, and, by 1397, this goal had been achieved.¹⁵ A packed parliament was particularly necessary since the punishments visited upon the former Appellants were more severe than those imposed in 1388 when only unentailed land had been stripped from the Appellants' victims. In 1397, the entire inheritances of Warwick, Gloucester and Arundel were forfeit, regardless of the rights of the heirs or of entails on the lands.¹⁶ By overriding these devices, the king and parliament sent a message to every landowner in the country that, whatever devices they employed to protect their estates, their lands and livelihoods would never be safe from Richard. Considering that the parliamentary Commons, who sanctioned the forfeitures, came from this very group, they must have been very well managed indeed, since they were effectively putting their own inheritances at risk.

After Arundel's trial and execution, Warwick was brought before the Commons.¹⁷ He was charged with raising an armed force to oppose the king at Radcot Bridge in 1387 and involvement in the Appeal of 1387–8. He confessed to both charges. According to Adam of Usk he appeared a broken, pathetic creature, even cowardly, 'like a wretched old woman ... weeping and whining'. Considering Warwick's career before 1397, it is possible that he has been unfairly maligned by the chronicler, but the fact remains that he did confess. Initially, he was sentenced to death, but the king commuted this to life imprisonment on the Isle of Man and the total forfeiture of all the Beauchamp estates.¹⁸ After Warwick's sentence was passed, he was moved first to Tintagel Castle, and then to the Isle of Man, which was in the keeping of the infamous William le Scrope, the newly created earl of Wiltshire.¹⁹ In September 1397 the future looked very bleak for Warwick and his affinity.

¹⁵ Above, pp. 123–4, 133–4.

¹⁶ Above, pp. 135–6. Although the separate inheritances of wives and widows were safeguarded: Ross, 'Forfeitures for Treason', pp. 574–5; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 191–2; Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, pp. 169–70. There was also an attempt to confiscate the goods of some of Warwick's closest retainers (including John Catesby), apparently without trial or due legal process, but this was reversed a few months later: *CPR 1396–9*, p. 238; below, p. 213, n. 107.

¹⁷ *RP* III, p. 377.

¹⁸ *Usk*, p. 161; *RP* III, pp. 376–7. Given-Wilson has shown that this portrayal may be the result of a mistake by the transcriber of the chronicle: Given-Wilson, 'Adam Usk', p. 331. He also points out that Usk seems to have been attempting to dilute the original version of Warwick's disgrace which he copied from the account of the monk of Evesham, which was even harsher in its depiction of Warwick: *Historia Vitae*, p. 145. By confessing, Warwick may also have been trying to mitigate the impact of his disgrace on his son: above, pp. 188–9.

¹⁹ *CCR 1396–9*, pp. 172, 346.

As noted above, Richard continued his blatant disregard for the law which protected his subjects' basic rights to their property over the next two years of his rule, in policies that affected every landowner in the country. In 1397–8, the mounting insecurities at the centre generated by his rule led to mutual recriminations and accusations of treason and thence to the banishment of both Bolingbroke and Mowbray. Significantly for this study, Mowbray was banished for life and all his lands seized.²⁰ Furthermore, because Richard had made an enemy of Bolingbroke, he could not allow the enormous landed power of the Lancastrian inheritance to fall into his hands. On the death of Gaunt in February 1399, the king decided to revoke his promises concerning the Lancastrian inheritance. Instead of allowing Bolingbroke to inherit, as had originally been agreed, Richard seized the entire inheritance and redistributed it to his followers. It was this total disrespect for the laws of primogenitary inheritance that finally precipitated Richard's downfall. If even the greatest noble estates in the land were not safe from Richard's depredations, then no man could be sure of his property.²¹ In late June/early July, Bolingbroke took the opportunity presented by Richard's absence in Ireland to invade.²² The king's support rapidly crumbled in the face of his advance, and Richard himself was soon a prisoner in Henry's hands, his deposition inevitable.²³ Richard's treatment of Bolingbroke should not be seen as the sole reason for his deposition, however. Rather, it encapsulated the attitude towards rule which had made him increasingly dangerous and ultimately made him unviable as a king; the events of 1397–9 in the West Midlands demonstrate this perfectly.

Following Warwick's arrest, the earl's estates were first seized and then partitioned. In redistributing the forfeited Beauchamp estates, Richard and his advisers showed themselves to be aware of the way in which magnate power functioned in the localities. It is noticeable that, just as he had throughout the 1390s, the king saw his magnates, not just the gentry, as an integral and essential part of his policy. The majority of the Beauchamp estates were not given to gentry members of the royal affinity, but to their noble counterparts.²⁴ The redistribution was carried out in a methodical manner, and its goals were clear. Richard intended to break

²⁰ *Annales Ricardi Secundi*, p. 225; *Historia Vitae*, p. 148; *RP* III, pp. 353, 360; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 207–9.

²¹ *Annales Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 232–3; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 209–11; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 403–4; Biggs, *Three Armies in Britain*, pp. 93–5.

²² *Annales Ricardi Secundi*, p. 244; *Historia Vitae*, pp. 151–2; *Dieulacres*, pp. 171–3; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 491–2; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 211–14; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 407–9.

²³ McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 492–4; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 218–19; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 413–17.

²⁴ Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 264–7.



Figure 5 The partition of the Beauchamp estates, 1397

up the old axis of power which rested on the swathe of lands running south-west from Warwick to Elmley Castle, and to create new territorial blocs which dovetailed with existing land-holding patterns where possible.²⁵ Each of the grants was made first in fee simple, then in tail male. Thus, Thomas Holland II, the new duke of Surrey, who had succeeded his father as earl of Kent in April 1397, was given Warwick Castle and its dependent manors, two manors further north, plus three in southern-central Worcestershire. The shrievalty of Worcestershire remained in the hands of the king, however.²⁶ Mowbray (now duke of Norfolk) kept the lands which Warwick had been forced to enfeoff to him in June, which fitted neatly with his existing estates.²⁷ He did not, however, receive any further grant of land in the West Midlands, possibly because the king was fearful of making any one noble too powerful in the region. It may be for this reason that neither Lancaster nor Bolingbroke received any forfeited lands from the West Midlands, although it is also possible that Mowbray and Bolingbroke were already regarded with suspicion by the king.²⁸ Thomas Despenser, who had been promoted to the earldom of Gloucester, was given Elmley Castle and its dependants, with other Beauchamp manors in central and north Worcestershire. This settlement fitted perfectly with the Despenser lands in the county, which were concentrated in the south-west around Hanley Castle, and just over the border in Gloucestershire.²⁹ The other newcomer, John Lord Montague, the newly promoted earl of Salisbury, was given the most northerly of the Beauchamp estates, around Hadzor and Shrawley. Since the traditional Marcher power base of the Montagues was centred on Shropshire and the Marches, it seems that Richard hoped that Salisbury's influence could be extended from Shropshire to his new estates over the Worcestershire border.³⁰ Finally, the title of baron of Kidderminster was restored to John Beauchamp of Holt II, Richard's godson, although he was not yet of age. This title conferred no extra power on Beauchamp, however, since the

²⁵ For a description of the Beauchamp estates: above, pp. 43–6.

²⁶ See Figure 3. The full grant to Surrey was: the castle and manor of Warwick with Wedgnoek Park, Claverdon, Haseley and Hatton, Sutton Coldfield (Warwks.), Salwarpe, Wadborough, Stoulton and Beoley (Worcs.). The grant totalled 1,010 marks per annum: *CPR 1396–9*, pp. 200, 215.

²⁷ Above, pp. 186–7; *CPR 1396–9*, pp. 219–20.

²⁸ Mowbray was given a substantial block of Arundel's lands in the south-east, however: *CPR 1396–9*, p. 220; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 192; Saul, *Richard II*, p. 382, n. 59.

²⁹ The grant to Despenser was: Elmley Castle and manor, Grafton Flyford, Abberley, Sintley, Great Comberton, Elmley Lovett: *CPR 1396–9*, pp. 219–20. Twenty years later, Richard Beauchamp was to achieve a similar amalgamation of the Beauchamp and Despenser lands through his marriage to the Despenser heiress: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 31.

³⁰ The manors were: Hadzor, Shrawley, Rock and Ribbesford, with £20 rent in Worcester: *CPR 1396–9*, pp. 213–14. For the Montacute lands see *CIPM 1391–9*, pp. 313–24. They also held the Shropshire castles and towns of Moldesdale and Hawarden: Davies, *Lordship and Society*, p. 471.

estates his father had acquired at Kidderminster and Astley had been lost in 1388 and purchased by Warwick on behalf of Sir William Beauchamp. Although Beauchamp of Holt inherited his father's substantial entailed lands, he was not influential enough to play any real part in the politics of the region.³¹

As we shall see, the exile of Mowbray and Bolingbroke in 1398, and the death of Lancaster and the sequestration of the Lancastrian inheritance in 1399, led to further redistributions of landed power in Warwickshire, though Worcestershire was largely unaffected. Since Mowbray had forfeited his lands, the Beauchamp estates which he had been granted were now given to Surrey in tail male. Apart from Lancaster, he was now the only magnate left in Warwickshire whom Richard could trust. This grant meant that most of the Beauchamp lands in Warwickshire were now in Surrey's hands, and he was undoubtedly the most powerful noble in the county after Gaunt.³² Following the death of Lancaster in February 1399 and Richard's decision to bar Bolingbroke from seisin of the inheritance, Surrey also acquired many of the Lancastrian lands in the midlands and Wales, including the key fortress of Kenilworth.³³ These grants to Surrey united much of the inheritances of Warwick, Mowbray and Lancaster in his hands, and in theory should have made him more powerful than any of them had ever been. But how successful were Surrey and his counterparts in using their new estates to influence local politics and create a new power structure in the West Midlands? These questions can be answered through analyses of the local office-holders in the region and of the success the nobility had in building up a local following.

The king's attempt to redistribute local power amongst his followers was reinforced by appointments to local office. The policy which he had been following since his return to power in 1389 he was now able to extend, unhindered by Warwick's influence. As in the period 1389–97, Richard concentrated mainly on the peace commissions and sheriffs.³⁴ From 1397, however, as his rule created growing insecurities at the centre, so he found it increasingly difficult to find men locally whom he could trust. After 1397, it was clear that he could not use members of the Beauchamp affinity, and by mid 1398 neither could he rely on members of the Lancastrian or Mowbray affinities. As a result, the sheriffs were either royal retainers – for

³¹ Above, pp. 135–6; *HP* II, pp. 152–4. No attempt seems to have been made to regain Kidderminster and Astley.

³² *CPR* 1396–9, p. 429. This seems to be a reversal of policy from 1397, when power was evenly distributed, but, with Mowbray and Bolingbroke both exiled, Richard had no choice but to give more responsibility to Surrey.

³³ *CFR* 1391–9, pp. 298–9; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 210–11.

³⁴ Above, pp. 161–3, 173–6.

example the sheriff of Warwickshire, John Eynesford (1397–9) – or closely connected to the royal affinity, like Adomar Lichfeld (1398–August 1399) and Robert Russell (Worcestershire, 1398–February 1400).³⁵ With the frequent confiscations of lands in this period, it also became important for the king to appoint escheators who could be trusted. Thus, the escheators for the region were all drawn from royal supporters. For Warwickshire they were Hugh Dalby (1395–March 1398), who as a member of the Mowbray affinity probably lost his office when his lord came under suspicion, and Guy Spyney, the former Beauchamp man, who had been drawn into Surrey's orbit (1398–October 1399). In Worcestershire, John Vampage held the office from January 1397 until his murder in May 1398, and he was followed by the royal esquire John Bras.³⁶

A similar attempt was made to ensure that the peace commissions were entirely under royal control. Two weeks after Warwick's arrest, new commissions of the peace were issued. These were temporary, and lasted only until the acts of the September parliament had been completed.³⁷ Even so, Richard signalled his intentions very clearly through the appointments to the benches. In Warwickshire, Mowbray appeared for the first time, whilst Bagot was reappointed after a gap of nearly seven years. In Worcestershire, Despenser's new role in the county was acknowledged by his first appointment to the bench, where he was joined by two of his own men, Thomas Brugge and Richard Ruyhall.³⁸

In November, a second set of commissions was issued.³⁹ These were meant to reflect the new political order established after the partitioning of the Appellant lands. Both commissions were swollen in size: there were thirteen JPs in Warwickshire and twelve in Worcestershire. The numbers were particularly enlarged because the king added to the benches more noble JPs than either county had experienced before.⁴⁰ Thus, in Warwickshire, the nobility was represented by Lancaster, Bolingbroke

³⁵ *L&I* 9, pp. 145, 147. For Lichfeld and Russell: above, pp. 157, 173–4. For Eynesford: Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 230, 233.

³⁶ *List of Escheators*, pp. 169, 178. For Spyney: below, p. 203. For Vampage: above, pp. 158–9, and below, pp. 220–1.

³⁷ *CPR* 1396–9, p. 228. The commissioners for Warwickshire were: Lancaster, Mowbray, Bagot, John Clinton, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey, William Thirnyng (assize justice), John Woderove (assize justice). For Worcestershire: Despenser, Thomas Brugge, John Cassy (assize justice), John Hull, Hugh Huls (assize justice), John Russell, Robert Russell, Richard Ruyhall.

³⁸ *CPR* 1396–9, pp. 228, 231. Brugge was acting as Despenser's attorney in 1394: *ibid.*, p. 507.

³⁹ *CPR* 1396–9, pp. 231, 238. The commissioners for Warwickshire were: Lancaster, Bolingbroke, Surrey, William Astley, Thomas Astley, Bagot, John Catesby, John Clinton, Robert Goushill, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey, William Thirnyng, Robert Tirwhit (assize justice). For Worcestershire: Salisbury, Despenser, Worcester, Wiltshire, John Blount, Thomas Brugge, Henry Bruyn, John Cassy, John Hull, Hugh Huls, John Russell, Robert Russell.

⁴⁰ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 200–1.

and Surrey. Significantly, Mowbray was omitted: perhaps he was already coming under suspicion, though this suspicion did not yet apply to his affinity. In Worcestershire, royal power was reinforced with the appointments of Salisbury, Despenser, Thomas Percy earl of Worcester and the earl of Wiltshire. Although Salisbury and Despenser had both received a portion of the Beauchamp lands in the county, neither Worcester nor Wiltshire, both of whom were very close to the king, had any landed interests in Worcestershire.⁴¹ They were appointed so that they could sit at local sessions if the king required it. The rest of the commissions were made up of men with connections to local nobles, such as the Mowbray men Robert Goushill and Hugh Dalby – suggesting that Mowbray was not yet completely out of favour – or to the royal affinity, such as Robert Russell and John Blount.⁴² Conversely, several previously active JPs are noticeable by their absence. For example, Sir Walter Cokesey, a man with connections to Warwick, who had been on every Worcestershire peace commission since 1377, was not reappointed. It seems that Cokesey was too close to Warwick to be trusted. Nevertheless, a few men who had been employed by Warwick before 1397 were included in the new peace commissions. These were all men with legal expertise: John Catesby and Thomas and William Purfrey in Warwickshire and Henry Bruyn in Worcestershire. Significantly, none of the commissioners had links to the new regional nobility such as Salisbury or Surrey

In Worcestershire, no further changes were made to the commissions until the accession of Henry IV.⁴³ But in Warwickshire two more commissions had to be issued in response to the exile of Bolingbroke and the death of Lancaster.⁴⁴ By April 1399, Surrey was the only member of the nobility on the Warwickshire bench, reflecting his theoretical dominance of the region. But the rest of the commission was largely unchanged; Robert Goushill, who had been retained by the king, remained as a JP, as did John Catesby and Thomas Purfrey. The one addition to the bench was John Russell, following his arrival in Warwickshire through his marriage to the widow of John Clinton of Maxstoke.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 246–8

⁴² For the careers of Goushill, Dalby, Blount and Russell, see above, pp. 153–4, 158, and below, pp. 216, 224–9.

⁴³ Below, pp. 227–8.

⁴⁴ The changes took place in November 1398 and April 1399: *CPR 1396–9*, pp. 436–7. The commissioners for November were: Lancaster, Surrey, William Astley, Thomas Astley, William Bagot, John Catesby, Hugh Dalby (who was retained by Richard following Mowbray's disgrace: *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 78), Robert Goushill, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey, Robert Tirwhit. For April 1399: Surrey, William Astley, Thomas Astley, Bagot, Catesby, Goushill, Thomas Purfrey, John Russell, William Thirnyng.

⁴⁵ *CPR 1396–9*, p. 437; below, p. 210. Goushill had become a king's esquire by October 1397, when he was granted Warwick's forfeited manor of Haselor: *CPR 1396–9*, p. 206.

As Richard tried to implement his ideas about government through direct royal control of the localities, the peace commissions of 1397 were the first to reflect the new political order for which he had been planning, in which private and public power were placed in the hands of men whom he trusted. But despite Warwick's fall, Richard found it impossible to exclude every man with links to the earl, particularly those with legal training like John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey and Henry Bruyn. In August 1397, Catesby had been close enough to Warwick to suffer a temporary reversal of fortune when his goods were seized. Although he was excluded from the July peace commission, by November he had recovered his goods and his position as a JP.⁴⁶ The reasons for the continuing inclusion of these lawyers with connections to Warwick will become apparent when the identity of the 'working justices' is examined and placed in the wider context of the politics of the West Midlands during the tyranny.

Unfortunately the activities of the JPs are particularly poorly documented for the period 1397–9. There are only two surviving records of proceedings before the JPs in Warwickshire. The first dates from the period after April 1398 but before September 1399. The three JPs, William Bagot and the assize justices William Thirnyng and Robert Tirwhit, heard an indictment for a murder at Saltley (near Birmingham).⁴⁷ The second session for which evidence survives took place in March 1399. The evidence concerned an indictment originally heard before Warwick and the JPs in 1391, regarding the murder of Thomas Souter by Adam Sampson, the murder in which Bagot had been implicated in 1395.⁴⁸ This time, the indictment was heard before Bagot and the former Beauchamp men John Catesby and Thomas Purfrey. Considering Bagot's possible previous involvement in this case, his participation in hearing the indictment is curious. The best explanation may be that Catesby was using the affair as a means of pursuing his dispute with Bagot, and that Bagot was attempting to protect himself and his followers by using his own powers as a JP. It is difficult to argue from just two examples that Bagot was continuously active as a JP between 1397 and 1399, but we can see that, on one occasion at least, he was certainly taking advantage of his reappointment to the bench in 1397. Like any other member of the county bench, indeed, quite possibly like Catesby in this instance, he could and did use his

⁴⁶ *CPR* 1396–9, p. 238; below, p. 213, n. 107.

⁴⁷ Unfortunately, no date is given for this hearing, although it must have been after 3 April, when the murder was alleged to have occurred, and before Bagot's imprisonment in September 1399: *TNA JUST* 3/188, m. 14. The case is discussed more fully below, pp. 214–15. See also [Appendix IIA](#).

⁴⁸ *TNA KB* 9, 185/1, m. 9; above, pp. 181–2; [Appendix IIA](#).

powers when the need arose. The only difference was that Bagot had the direct support and power of the king with which to influence local politics.

There is slightly more evidence concerning the Worcestershire JPs.⁴⁹ For the known sessions between July 1397 and August 1398, of which there are three, the royal justices John Hall and John Cassy were present.⁵⁰ On the third occasion, however, in August 1398, the clerk did write down the names of all the JPs present, but the manuscript is badly faded and two of the names are illegible. Those that can be read show that John Russell, John Cassy and John Blount were all present.⁵¹ Although the evidence for the activities of the Worcestershire JPs is rather sparse, there are distinct similarities with Warwickshire. Both benches were staffed by 'professional' lawyers and justices, but by 1397 both were also being used as a means of asserting and enhancing the new political power structures in the region. The participation of John Russell, like his counterpart Bagot in Warwickshire, suggests that they were both active agents of Richard's rule in the localities and that the peace commissions had assumed a more permanent importance as a channel by which they could control local politics through the judicial system. Equally important for the politics of the West Midlands, however, is that the new West Midlands magnates or their men were not involved in the operation of the peace commissions. This may well have been because of their responsibilities elsewhere, a dangerous development for the central government. As a result, the government had little choice but to allow men such as Catesby and Purfrey to continue in their roles; good, experienced legal men were hard to find and therefore tended to be largely immune from political upheavals.⁵²

The evidence of appointments to local office suggests that the new nobility were failing to assert or extend their new influence in the region, even though they were supported by the landed dominance which had once made Warwick so influential. That the new regional magnates should control local politics was an essential part of Richard's policy. It was therefore vital that they built up their own followings locally. They also needed to find a means of reintegrating the Beauchamp affinity into local politics to avoid the further alienation of its members from the regime. Thus, a measure of the new magnates' impact on West Midlands

⁴⁹ Appendix II B.

⁵⁰ Putnam, *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, p. 407 (Hall, 20 July 1397), p. 402 (Cassy, 13 December 1397); Appendix II B.

⁵¹ TNA C 258/34/7.

⁵² The dearth of available candidates whom Richard could trust is mirrored in similar problems experienced in another period of political crisis, the late 1450s: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 421–2; for the role of lawyers: below, p. 204.

politics is their ability to retain local men, or in some other way offer a source of alternative lordship to the Beauchamp affinity. This aspect of local politics can best be considered by asking the question: to what extent did the Beauchamp affinity remain a cohesive socio-political force and to what extent were loyalties transferred to other lords?

To answer this question, we must bear in mind the nature of the medieval affinity, which has often been characterised as a series of concentric circles around the lord. The outermost ‘circle’ is often described as consisting of an amorphous and ill-defined group of ‘well-willers’. This group was not directly retained or employed by the lord, but was connected to him through links to other members of the affinity, and tended to drift in and out of the lord’s orbit.⁵³ During the period 1397–9, it was to be expected that this group within the Warwick affinity would be dispersed, since its ties with the earl were never particularly close or stable. A good example of this was the Trymenell family, with whom Warwick had had links before 1397, but who, after this date, can be found acting on Surrey’s behalf in the Ladbroke dispute.⁵⁴

The depletion of the ‘outer circle’ of Warwick’s followers was a natural corollary of his removal from local politics, but how did feed members of his retinue behave? One notable example which may suggest that loyalties could be transferred is that of Guy Spyney, who became Surrey’s receiver-general in 1398 and escheator of Warwickshire in 1398–9. Spyney had a long history of service to Warwick and many ties with members of the Beauchamp affinity, particularly Thomas Burdet and William Spernore, and it is not entirely clear why he should have renounced his ties to the earl so completely.⁵⁵ Perhaps he thought that Warwick had failed adequately to protect him when he was accused of murder in 1395, or perhaps he simply decided that the settlement of 1397 was permanent and that Warwick would never be restored.⁵⁶

Members of the Beauchamp affinity can also be found serving other lords in various capacities. Some, like Richard Ruyhall, had already moved into the orbit of rival affinities such as the Despenser following before 1397.⁵⁷ Others, for example Thomas Throkmerton and William Spernore, found alternative employment in the two years following

⁵³ Cherry, ‘Courtenay Earls of Devon’, pp. 72–80; Carpenter, ‘Beauchamp Affinity’, pp. 514–16; G. L. Harriss, ‘Introduction’, in McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. xi–xiii; Sinclair, ‘Beauchamp Earls of Warwick’, pp. 262–3; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 8–18.

⁵⁴ For example, in 1385, Warwick requested a pardon for William Trymenell ‘cook’ following a murder: *CPR* 1385–9, p. 43. A Richard Trymenell was witness to a lease by the earl in 1383: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 68r. Henry and Nicholas Trymenell were both retained by Warwick: [Appendix 1](#).

⁵⁵ SBT DR 37/107/7; Post, ‘Ladbroke Dispute’, pp. 322, 325; below, pp. 204–5; [Appendix 1](#).

⁵⁶ Above, p. 185.

⁵⁷ Above, pp. 152–3.

Warwick's fall. Throkmerton went to Ireland in Despenser's war retinue, whilst Spynore sat on Despenser's council in 1397.⁵⁸ Can the evidence of Spyney, Ruyhall, Throkmerton and Spynore be used to argue that there was a wholesale defection from the Beauchamp affinity? We have already seen that there were different levels of commitment to a lord's service, and it is clear from the attitudes of Thomas and Richard Beauchamp after 1399 that some of these defections were seen as less disloyal than others.

Members of the gentry with legal training and professional legal men held a special position within the affinity of a lord. Generally, it seems that it was accepted that a man with legal training could serve several different lords, as long as there was no direct conflict of interest.⁵⁹ A good example of this type was Richard Ruyhall. Ruyhall had links with both Warwick and Despenser. Although it seems that he had severed links with Warwick by moving into Despenser's orbit, his position, and Warwick's attitude towards him, were less clear-cut. After 1399, Ruyhall returned to Warwick's service, without any apparent ill-feeling between them.⁶⁰ Similarly, a contract to serve in a war retinue did not necessarily indicate a more permanent relationship between lord and man, although it did happen sometimes that initial contact was made in this way.⁶¹ Thus, Thomas Throkmerton, who served in Ireland with Despenser in 1399, was able to return to the Beauchamp affinity, where his first loyalty lay. After 1399, he rose rapidly in Thomas and Richard Beauchamp's service, becoming a JP in 1401 and constable of Elmley Castle by the September of the same year.⁶²

It is clear from the careers of Throkmerton and Ruyhall that Warwick did not regard their activities on behalf of other lords as a bar to serving him. Like Henry IV, the Beauchamps seem to have been prepared to forgive those who had only co-operated with, rather than whole-heartedly supported, the Ricardian regime.⁶³ But their attitude was very different in the cases of the Russell and Vampage families and Guy Spyney. After 1401, John Russell was dropped from public office; even his son was tainted by association and did not hold office until 1416.⁶⁴ Although Guy

⁵⁸ Mott, 'Richard II's Relations with his Magnates', pp. 226–7.

⁵⁹ Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism*, pp. 134–61 and esp. pp. 162–91; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 293–5.

⁶⁰ *HP* IV, pp. 261–3. By 1401, Ruyhall was renewing his links with the Beauchamp affinity. In that year, one of this mainpennors was Thomas Throkmerton: *CFR 1399–1405*, p. 118.

⁶¹ Carpenter, 'Beauchamp Affinity', pp. 519–20; Harriss, 'Introduction', pp. x–xi.

⁶² *HP* IV, pp. 609–10; Driver, 'Knights of the Shire III', p. 18; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 104, 371, 334.

⁶³ Below, pp. 235–6.

⁶⁴ *HP* IV, pp. 259–60; part of William Russell's exclusion from politics may also have been due to the fact that the majority of his landed inheritance was in the hands of his stepmother, Elizabeth: below, p. 210.

Spyney lived until at least 1412, he was also excluded from local office and from the Beauchamp affinity after 1399.⁶⁵ The Vampages, meanwhile, were not rehabilitated until the 1420s. Why were these families not forgiven? The answer lies in the nature of their involvement in the 1397–9 regime. Spyney, Russell and Vampage were all inextricably identified either with the confiscation of the Warwick estates or with another lord.⁶⁶ Russell's defection dated back to 1387, but in 1397 he profited directly from Warwick's fall, when he purchased some of the Beauchamp estates in Worcestershire.⁶⁷ He was also one of the king's councillors and closely identified with Richard's rule. In 1399, he only just escaped with his life but was not tried for his part in the tyranny and was allowed to retire to his estates. Similarly, by serving Surrey as receiver-general and acting as escheator in 1398–9, Spyney had irrevocably broken his links with Warwick by taking an active role in the dispersal of the Beauchamp patrimony, an unforgivable action. The Vampages were frozen out for the same reason; as escheator in 1397–8, John Vampage had been involved in the confiscation of the Beauchamp estates.⁶⁸

Following the criteria applied by the Beauchamps themselves, therefore, the men who were adjudged to have been disloyal formed a very small group. Much larger was the body of men who served Warwick both before 1397 and after 1399. This group included many of the leading retainers who had served him for years, such as William Spernore, Nicholas Lyllyng, Peter Holt, Ailred Trussell and the administrators Thomas Knyght, Robert Huggefurd and Henry Bruyn.⁶⁹ Whilst the years of political turmoil from the 1390s to c. 1405 meant that the Beauchamp affinity was put under intense pressure, it did not collapse completely, and in 1399 played a crucial role in supporting Bolingbroke's campaign and Warwick's escape.⁷⁰ Many members of the Beauchamp affinity all but disappear from public sight in the years 1397–9. Apart from those hauled up before the council or forced to pay recognisances, it seems

⁶⁵ Richard Beauchamp made sure, however, that the Spyney inheritance remained within his control: one of Spyney's heiresses married John Throkemerton: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 296–8; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 104.

⁶⁶ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 296–8.

⁶⁷ Above, pp. 127–8; *CPR* 1396–9, p. 275. These were the lands at Earl's Croome and Baughton which had been under dispute.

⁶⁸ Another John Vampage (possibly the son) was finally forgiven by Richard Beauchamp in the 1420s. His son later married into the Beauchamp affinity: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', p. 290. It should also be noted that the Northamptonshire knights John Trussell and Guy Mallory, who had both served Warwick before 1397, also made their peace with the regime to the extent that they raised troops for Richard in 1399; however, before this, they had both been subject to considerable harassment: *ibid.*, pp. 296–8; *HP* iv, pp. 666–9.

⁶⁹ Appendix 1.

⁷⁰ Below, pp. 224–5.

that most of the affinity bought their general pardons and retired to their estates in the hope of avoiding the attentions of the king. Many of the accustomed local office-holders, among them Nicholas Lyllyng, Walter Cokesey and Alexander Besford, were excluded from the local administration in 1397–9, but re-emerged after the deposition. But the inactivity of the Beauchamp affinity in local office was not mirrored in their private connections. Not only did many members of the Beauchamp affinity remain loyal to Warwick, but they also retained their associations with one another. Their political isolation and sense of alienation from the Ricardian regime and its representatives served only to deepen the pre-existing links between them.

Interestingly, in the periods of political crisis of 1387–8 and 1397–9 the number of surviving deeds from the region decreases significantly. This may have been due to a general reluctance to pursue settlements of land when serious political upheavals could render an agreement practically, if not theoretically, void.⁷¹ John Catesby's experiences in 1397–9 demonstrate how vulnerable even the most watertight of settlements could become to political faction.⁷² In 1397–9, no deeds and settlements at all have survived for the months of June to October 1397 and April to October 1399, the worst periods of crisis.⁷³ Nevertheless, from the deeds that do survive which concern members of the Beauchamp affinity, it is clear that they still turned to one another for the vital services of feoffee and witness. For example, in April 1398 William Spernore was using Thomas Aldebury (who had been one of Warwick's ministers) as a feoffee for lands he had acquired in Hambury (Worcestershire).⁷⁴ Similarly, John Fulwode of Tanworth, who had long-standing connections with the Beauchamp affinity, used Peter Holt and Robert Walden as feoffees for his lands in Tanworth and Nuthurst (Warwickshire) in January 1399. Holt was one of the longest-serving Beauchamp men; he had connections to the earls of Warwick stretching back to at least 1362, had served in Warwick's retinue in France in 1373–4 and by 1396 was acting as an officer on Warwick's estates. Walden had had links with the earl since 1377 and was considered close enough to Warwick in 1397 to be punished with seizure of his lands.⁷⁵ This enfeoffment may have been connected to an assize of novel disseisin brought by Ailred Trussell, another

⁷¹ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 476–81.

⁷² Below, pp. 215–19.

⁷³ Similarly, in Michaelmas 1399 the amount of business appearing in King's Bench dropped dramatically; litigants were not prepared to trust legal processes when it was not clear who was in charge of government: TNA KB 27/554.

⁷⁴ BL Add. Ch. 73634.

⁷⁵ For Holt and Walden, see [Appendix 1](#).

Beauchamp retainer, against Fulwode concerning the lease of the manor of Nuthurst.⁷⁶ Although it is impossible to be certain, this may have been a collusive action. Even if it was not, it is significant that an agreement was reached afterwards in which followers of Warwick relied almost exclusively on one another.

Even though deeds are sparse for this period, the impression gained from them is confirmed by the pardon rolls. Nearly every member of the Beauchamp affinity took out pardons in the period 1397–9. It is noticeable, however, that many of these pardons were taken out in groups. Thus, the names of Robert Huggeford, John Grene, Thomas Knyght and Richard Trymenell appear in one group.⁷⁷ Other Beauchamp men, although not listed together, took out pardons on the same day. For example, Sir Giles Mallory and Sir Nicholas Lylling both appeared at Warwick on 18 October 1397 to sue out their pardons. Similarly, Sir Walter Cokesey and Thomas Throkmerton both took out pardons at Warwick on 15 June 1398.⁷⁸ Where sureties were required in King's Bench, Beauchamp men nearly always turned to other Beauchamp men for their mainpernors. For example, in 1397 the mainpernors for Thomas Throkmerton and Thomas Hoddington included Ailred Trussell.⁷⁹

From this evidence, it can be concluded that Warwick's replacements such as Despenser and Salisbury made very little impact on local society in Worcestershire. Because Salisbury's new estates were on the peripheries of his landed interests, he does not appear to have formed any connections in north Worcestershire. There is no evidence that his influence was felt at all in the region. Despenser, meanwhile, formed only fleeting links with Thomas Throkmerton and William Spernore.⁸⁰ Neither of the latter two men was appointed to local office in the period, a sure sign that they were still considered to be primarily Warwick's men. Thus, the only real attachments that Despenser made in the region had already been formed before 1397, and the only members of his affinity to hold office in Worcestershire between 1397 and 1399 were Thomas Brugge and Richard Ruyhall II.⁸¹

⁷⁶ SBT DR 37/823; TNA JUST 1/1504, m. 4.

⁷⁷ TNA C 67/30, m. 16. Recently, Lacey has shown how Richard's misuse of the royal pardon was part of his manipulation of his opponents: H. Lacey, "Mercy and Truth Preserve the King": Richard II's use of Royal Pardons in 1397 and 1398, in Hamilton (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* IV, pp. 124–35.

⁷⁸ TNA C 67/30, m. 12.

⁷⁹ TNA KB 27/546, *Rex*, mm. 19–20.

⁸⁰ Above, pp. 152–3.

⁸¹ Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, p. 289; above, p. 199. Ruyhall was only appointed to the first commission of the peace issued in July 1397, however: *CPR* 1396–9, p. 228. This evidence fits with the picture painted by Lawrence of Despenser's failure to extend his influence in the region: M. Lawrence,

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

In Warwickshire, the most influential magnate was Surrey, but his experience in Warwickshire was little different from that of the other new magnates, although more is known about his attempt and failure to assert himself in local politics because of the survival of John Catesby's account of the Ladbroke dispute.⁸² It is indeed possible to argue that Surrey's experience in Warwickshire was representative of that of all the new lords in the West Midlands. Like Salisbury, Surrey was at a natural disadvantage, because he was a newcomer to the region. As with Salisbury, many of his problems sprang from the fact that his main landed and political interests lay elsewhere. In 1397 his own estates were widely scattered, and at a considerable distance from his new endowment. Surrey's difficulties were compounded by his duties elsewhere. He must often have been at court, and in July 1398 he was made lieutenant of Ireland in place of Mortimer. In October, he left England to pursue his new role, and seems to have spent much of his time there.⁸³ These activities meant that he was not given a chance to establish himself locally. Although the king seems to have understood the principles of power, he did not comprehend the practice of lordship, especially that a noble needed to be on the spot to be truly effective. The situation worsened after the exiles of Mowbray and Bolingbroke in 1398 and the death of Lancaster in 1399, since Richard's only option was not only to allow Surrey to keep the power he had, but even to increase it.⁸⁴ Surrey's physical inability to be present in the West Midlands is illustrated by Catesby's records. In general, when Catesby wanted to see Surrey, he was forced to go to the duke's town house in London, although, on one occasion Surrey did manage to reach Northampton, and in late 1397 his council was in Coventry.⁸⁵ But his presence in Warwickshire seems to have been confined largely to symbolism and display, which, whilst a potent adjunct to lordship, was not an adequate replacement for the actual day-to-day exercise of lordly power.

Surrey's use of symbolism is particularly interesting, since it echoes the emphasis placed by the king himself on politico-religious imagery, which reached its apotheosis in the Wilton Diptych.⁸⁶ The duke seems

"'Too Flattering Sweet to be Substantial'?: The Last Months of Thomas, Lord Despenser', in Hamilton (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* IV, pp. 151–2.

⁸² Below, pp. 215–16.

⁸³ Mott, 'Richard II's Relations with his Magnates', pp. 46–54, 186–9; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 287–8. Richard III's 'planted men' faced similar problems with frequent absences a hundred years later: R. Horrox, *Richard III: A Study in Service* (Cambridge, 1989), esp. pp. 220–2.

⁸⁴ Above, pp. 197–8.

⁸⁵ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 320–2; Saul, *Richard II*, p. 444, n. 30.

⁸⁶ C. M. Barron, 'Richard II: Image and Reality', in D. Gordon (ed.), *Making and Meaning: The Wilton Diptych* (London, 1993), pp. 15, 18–19, 49–53.

to have been determined to assimilate the legends and traditions of the Beauchamps into the new Ricardian political order in the West Midlands. Thus, he placed his own badge, along with the king's, in stone above the gates of Warwick Castle. These were torn down by Bolingbroke in an equally symbolic act. Similarly, Surrey attempted to appropriate the legend of Guy of Warwick, the figure to whom all the Beauchamps looked as a chivalric model. In 1398, the king made a specific grant to Surrey of an arras which depicted the life of Guy.⁸⁷ In the same year, Surrey regranted an endowment to the collegiate church of St Mary's, Warwick, which was a Beauchamp foundation. In May 1397, shortly before his fall, Warwick had made a grant of several advowsons to the church to pay for masses for the souls of himself, his wife and ancestors in perpetuity. It may be significant, given the date of the grant, that there is no mention of the royal family. In July 1398, Surrey made exactly the same grant, but this time it was to pay for masses for the king and his queens, and of Surrey, his wife and ancestors.⁸⁸ Although this grant mentioned that the church had originally been founded by the Beauchamps, the message sent by his re-endowment was that Surrey and his family were the Beauchamps' replacements. However, notwithstanding Surrey's appropriation of the Beauchamp traditions and legends, he did not attract either Warwickshire political society at large or the Beauchamp affinity in particular, many of whom appear to have resented his intrusion into the region.

That Surrey did make an effort to become involved in Warwickshire politics, particularly in the Ladbroke dispute, to which we shall come shortly, is undeniable.⁸⁹ We have seen that he had one important success in detaching the former Beauchamp man Guy Spyney from his previous loyalties. Catesby's record of the Ladbroke dispute also shows that some lesser Beauchamp officials such as William Hull also appear to have transferred their loyalty to the duke. But these men were the exceptions. Catesby's records reveal that the duke tended to conduct his business via his long-standing retainers including Hugh Lutterel, Edward Scherd, Robert Clifton (his chamberlain) and Nicholas Gascoyne (his steward), none of whom were natives of the region.⁹⁰ As we have seen, Surrey's failure to make an impact on Warwickshire is reflected in the lack of appointments of Surrey's men to local office in the period apart from Guy Spyney and Surrey himself.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 323; *CPR* 1396–9, p. 315; E. Mason, 'Legends of the Beauchamps' Ancestors: The Use of Baronial Propaganda in Medieval England', *JMH*, 10 (1984), p. 34. Note, also, a very similar use of badges by the duke of Exeter in Devon: Saul, *Richard II*, p. 244.

⁸⁸ WCRO CR 26/A/4, fols. 33–4; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 228–31.

⁸⁹ Below, pp. 216–18.

⁹⁰ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 320–2. ⁹¹ *List of Escheators*, p. 169; above, p. 203.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

It rapidly became clear to Richard that Surrey was failing to exert his local power in an effective manner. In an attempt to solve this problem, Richard took the opportunity presented by the death of John Lord Clinton in late 1398 to grant the marriage of Clinton's widow Elizabeth to John Russell. This grant seems to have been made on the understanding that Russell would marry her himself, which he rapidly did.⁹² Elizabeth's marriage to Russell was her fourth. As an heiress in her own right she had attracted a series of husbands drawn from the upper gentry and lower baronage. As a girl, she had been married to John Bermyngeham, and as a result had gained dower rights in his manor of Birmingham. After Bermyngeham's death, she had made a second marriage to Reginald Lord Grey of Rotherfield, before marrying John Clinton in *c.* 1388.⁹³ By the time of her third marriage, Elizabeth was able to demand a high price for her hand. Not only was she an heiress, but she also held lands belonging to her two previous husbands in dower for her life. Clinton was willing to pay this price. Between 1389 and 1392 he settled the main Clinton estates in Warwickshire, including the family seat at Maxstoke Castle and manors of Shustoke, Bole Hall, Perry Croft and Austrey on himself and Elizabeth and their heirs. Potentially, this settlement could have disinherited Clinton's grandson and heir, William, although luckily for him the marriage was childless.⁹⁴ On John Clinton's death, therefore, Elizabeth became a substantial landowner in north Warwickshire. Through her marriage to Russell, the king hoped to introduce into Warwickshire a member of the royal affinity who was already a force in Worcestershire. But this arrangement was opposed by the Clinton heir, William, who resented the prospect of the greater part of his landed inheritance being managed by the Russells for the foreseeable future. In 1398, Clinton's protests were muted, and he was forced to accept the arrangement, which was backed by the king's will. In that year he made a series of agreements with the Russells that they should hold the Clinton properties uncontested. It was only with the fall of Richard and Russell's temporary disgrace that Clinton was able to seize his chance to snatch his inheritance, thus precipitating a violent dispute between the two men.⁹⁵

⁹² *CPR* 1396–9, p. 456.

⁹³ *VCH Warwks.* vii, pp. 58–9.

⁹⁴ BL Add. Ch. 54390; *CPR* 1388–92, p. 375; *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 88. Russell also had to make a similar arrangement. His main manors of Strensham and Peopleton were settled on him and Elizabeth and their heirs. This settlement would have effectively disinherited Russell's son and heir, William.

⁹⁵ *CPR* 1396–9, pp. 483, 491; *CCR* 1396–9, pp. 433–4, 440; below, pp. 231–3.

From 1397, as Richard created more opponents to his rule, he became increasingly determined to prevent or suppress any opposition. One method, which he had first employed in 1387, was the use of King's Bench in its capacity as superior eyre.⁹⁶ Although King's Bench had been perambulating regularly throughout the 1390s, its arrival at Coventry in Michaelmas 1397 was its first visit to the West Midlands since 1387. It then moved to Worcester in January 1398, Reading and Oxford at Easter and Gloucester in June. These perambulations closely followed the king's own movements as he sought security in his power bases in Coventry, the Welsh Marches and Cheshire.⁹⁷ As in 1387, the purpose of the eyre does not appear to have been the restoration of order, but to intimidate the localities with a show of strength. The presence of King's Bench in the region in 1397–8 may help to explain the lack of records from the local JPs, since most of their usual business of indictment for trespass would have gone straight to King's Bench in its capacity as a court of first instance.⁹⁸

Once again, the presence of King's Bench in the region meant that a wide-ranging investigation of breaches of the peace was conducted, stretching back to offences committed at least twenty years before. For example, the abbot of Evesham used the opportunity presented by Warwick's fall to pursue his long-standing grievances against the Beauchamp affinity for their attacks on his property in 1376. One of those accused in the abbot's plea was Warwick's man John Mountford of Warwick.⁹⁹ Similarly, some members of the Beauchamp affinity, who were now unprotected by the earl, found themselves vulnerable to prosecution, for example Thomas Hoddington and Thomas Throkmerton, who were both accused of murder. This may have encouraged the latter to seek service and protection with Despenser.¹⁰⁰ Other Beauchamp men, like William Trymenell, were called upon to produce pardons for previous offences.¹⁰¹ But, even taking these cases into account, the evidence from the rolls of King's Bench suggests that there were not nearly the same number of pleas brought against Warwick's ministers and men as there had been in 1387. It seems that the purpose of the superior eyre in 1397–8 was not to attack the Beauchamp affinity, which the king

⁹⁶ Above, pp. 125–7.

⁹⁷ TNA KB 27/436, 547, 548; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 473–4; Musson and Ormrod, *Evolution of English Justice*, pp. 204–5.

⁹⁸ Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 177–8; above, pp. 201–2; [Appendix II.A](#).

⁹⁹ TNA KB 27/548, *Rex*, m. 7; above, p. 84; below, p. 231.

¹⁰⁰ TNA KB 27/546, *Rex*, mm. 19–20; above, pp. 203–4; below, pp. 213–14.

¹⁰¹ TNA KB 27/547, m. 23. Trymenell had been pardoned for the murder of Robert Wodeford in 1385 at Warwick's request: *CPR 1385–9*, p. 43.

presumably considered by now to be politically defunct, but to augment Richard's power in the region through a visible show of strength and so deter any would-be rebels.

The role of King's Bench in these years was closely linked with the general pardons available at this time for those involved in the events of 1386–8. Some of the pardons which appear in the general pardon rolls for 1397–9 can be definitely linked to the proceedings in King's Bench. Both Throkmerton and Hoddington took out pardons in order to be able to produce them at a subsequent session of the court, although these pardons were also evidence of widespread insecurity across the region.¹⁰² Obviously, it is necessary to treat the evidence from the pardon rolls from these years with caution. Not every pardon taken out between 1397 and 1399 was 'political'. It seems likely that some men took advantage of the pardon for their own particular ends, not because they had been involved in the events of 1387–8. A good example of this is the case of the Mortimers of Tedstone Wafer (Herefordshire), who all took out pardons in 1398. Ostensibly, their need for pardons could have been because of their kinship with the earl of March. But closer inspection of the rolls of King's Bench reveals that they had been accused of a particularly nasty case of attempted murder and it is likely that it was for this reason that they bought general pardons, although this does not rule out the possibility that they were anxious about their connections to Mortimer, or indeed had supported the Appellants.¹⁰³ Similarly, it cannot be assumed that every Beauchamp man who acquired a pardon had been in Warwick's retinue in 1387–8. For example, it is unlikely that Ralph Ardern (Warwick's esquire in 1397) would have been old enough in 1387 to have taken an active role in events. Nevertheless, he sought a pardon in 1398, presumably because any connection to Warwick was dangerous, whether or not it dated back to 1387–8.¹⁰⁴

Even with these provisos, however, the sheer number of names on the pardon rolls for 1397–9 demonstrates that an unprecedented number of men took up the king's offer. Even after the Peasants' Revolt, only a few hundred men sought pardons.¹⁰⁵ Between 1397 and 1399, the numbers taking out pardons rose into the thousands. Such was the fear aroused by Richard's threat to withhold pardons from fifty unnamed men that every man in the West Midlands with a connection to Warwick, however distant, secured a pardon, as did many other members of the regional gentry,

¹⁰² TNA KB 27/546, *Rex*, mm. 19–20. Throkmerton took out two pardons on 12 and 15 June 1398: TNA C 67/30, mm. 10, 12. Hoddington took out his on 3 March: C 67/30, m. 3.

¹⁰³ TNA KB 27/547, *Rex*, m. 16; KB 27/548, *Rex*, m. 3; C 67/30, mm. 27, 34.

¹⁰⁴ TNA C 67/31, m. 12.

¹⁰⁵ TNA C 67/29.

even those who were now closely connected to the king, such as William Bagot. Some men were so concerned for their safety that they took out more than one pardon.¹⁰⁶ In this way, the king's tyranny touched nearly every member of the political society of the West Midlands, and made his rule increasingly unpopular.

As well as ensuring that his subjects in general were kept under control, the king also targeted specific people, who were called before the council to explain themselves, or were forced to take out recognisances. In July and August 1397, the first measures against any reaction by the Beauchamp affinity were taken. In July, orders were issued for the arrest of Warwick's followers and retainers, and in August the goods of four of Warwick's men were confiscated, though no specific charges were ever brought against them.¹⁰⁷ In April 1398, Richard's campaign against the Beauchamp affinity continued when Sir Giles Mallory and Sir John Trussell were summoned to appear before the king and council on pain of £200 'to declare what shall be laid before them'.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Mott has found that Beauchamp men were taking out recognisances in the exchequer: for example, William Spernore was bound by a recognisance of 200 marks and John Trussell by 40 marks. No explanation is given for these bonds, but it is likely that they were political in nature, designed, by threatening their livelihoods, to prevent these men from opposing the king.¹⁰⁹ Very little is known of the reactions these measures provoked, although, judging by the new magnates' inability to attract former Beauchamp men into their service, there can be little doubt that Richard's tyranny was resented and feared by the very people whose loyalty he was attempting to secure. This assumption is supported by two factors: first, the degenerating state of order in the region, and, second, evidence of resistance to Richard's regime.

One of the worst-affected regions with regard to disorder was northern Warwickshire, especially the region around Aston and Sutton Coldfield. The Aston dispute between the Holts (supported by Lancaster and Bagot) and John Drayton (who had connections with the royal affinity) had already led to murder in December 1396.¹¹⁰ From 1397, the situation

¹⁰⁶ TNA C 67/31, m. 13 (Bagot). For example, Nicholas Lylling took out pardons on 16 June and 18 October 1398: C 67/30, m. 3; Barron, 'Tyranny of Richard II', pp. 6–9. Bagot probably took out his pardon because of his involvement in the Merciless Parliament: above, p. 133.

¹⁰⁷ CCR 1396–9, pp. 138–9, 155, 157; CFR 1391–9, p. 227. The men arrested were: Nicholas Lylling, John Catesby, William Spernore and Robert Walden. In October 1397, both Walden and Catesby had the decision reversed.

¹⁰⁸ CCR 1396–9, p. 277. The John More who was also summoned with them may be synonymous with Warwick's receiver of that name.

¹⁰⁹ Mott, 'Richard II's Relations with his Magnates', pp. 289–97.

¹¹⁰ Above, pp. 177–9.

in the north deteriorated into further confusion, during which two more murders were perpetrated. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to determine exactly what was happening and who was supporting whom, but this confusion is, in itself, indicative of the lack of firm leadership and lordship in the area. On 5 September 1397, the problems in the north became apparent when Simon Cokkes was murdered at Sutton Coldfield, one of Warwick's confiscated manors. Although Cokkes' identity remains obscure, his death seems to have been connected to the general disruption in the region. Those accused included Henry Hageley, the sheriff of Worcestershire (who had been appointed by the king himself), and his kinsmen, together with the former Beauchamp men Thomas Hoddington and Thomas Throkmerton. It was also claimed that Richard Ruyhall II (who had links with the Despenser affinity) had aided and abetted them.¹¹¹ Such was the confusion in the region that there was considerable fluctuation and fluidity amongst the rival groupings. Thus, Hoddington and Throkmerton, who were now lordless, were temporarily linked with Hageley and his kinsmen. It may be significant that the murder took place at one of Warwick's former manors. In 1398, Surrey was to have particular problems in controlling the region around Sutton Coldfield.¹¹² This incident may reflect the mounting tensions in the region caused by the removal of Warwick's controlling hand.

In April 1398, there was another murder in north Warwickshire. On this occasion, Richard Clodeshale and John Auncell were indicted before the JPs for the murder of Robert Andrewes at Clodeshale's manor of Saltley.¹¹³ Clodeshale came from a successful merchant family, which, in the late fourteenth century, built up considerable landed holdings in the region around Birmingham.¹¹⁴ His accomplice, Auncell, seems to have been of lesser status. Their victim had had some association with Hugh Burnell, although this may have lapsed by this time.¹¹⁵ It is possible that the murder was the result of a dispute over Clodeshale's manor of Saltley: in early 1400, Clodeshale brought a plea of trespass claiming that in October 1399 William Lench and others had attacked his property there.¹¹⁶ But, as in the other disputes in the region, the situation was exacerbated by the deep divisions between members of the royal affinity

¹¹¹ TNA KB 27/546, *Rex*, mm. 19–20. For Hageley and his appointment: above, pp. 187–8, n. 253.

¹¹² Below, pp. 219–20.

¹¹³ TNA JUST 3/188, m. 14.

¹¹⁴ These included Water Orton, Pedmore and Woodcote: *VCH Warwicks*, IV, p. 262; VII, p. 65; *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 24–5, 201.

¹¹⁵ In 1390, Andrewes was a co-defendant with Burnell in an assize of novel disseisin: TNA JUST 1/1501, m. 39. There is no other reference to their connection, however.

¹¹⁶ TNA KB 27/555, m. 45d.

and the rest of local society. It seems that Clodeshale may already have formed links to the Beauchamp affinity by this time. When, in early 1400, he was made to give a surety to keep the peace, his mainpernors included William Spernore, Warwick's long-serving retainer.¹¹⁷ A possible link can also be made between Clodeshale's opponent in 1399–1400, William Lench, and the royal affinity. Lench's mainpernors included the esquire Geoffrey Ardern, who, in November 1399, acted as a feoffee for John Holland duke of Exeter.¹¹⁸ If Lench was already opposing Clodeshale in 1398, the possibility that this was a feud between the royal affinity and members of the Beauchamp circle is strengthened by the interest which William Bagot took in the case. In c. 1398, Bagot was one of the JPs who heard the indictments against Clodeshale and Auncell.¹¹⁹ It can therefore be suggested, if only tentatively, that Clodeshale's links with the Beauchamp affinity drew him into the existing feud in the north between those who were attached to the royal affinity and those who resented its interference.

If the situation in the north of Warwickshire was one of considerable confusion and fluctuating alliances, then in other parts of the West Midlands it is evident that direct intervention in disputes by members of the royal affinity caused considerable discontent and resentment. This is at its clearest in the Ladbroke dispute. After William Bagot's previous involvement in this affair in 1384, there are no further allegations against him in Catesby's account until 1397.¹²⁰ Then, with Warwick in exile, the Cardians and their son-in-law William Hathewick launched a renewed assault on Catesby's claim to the Ladbroke inheritance. They appealed to the new representatives of royal power in the region, Bagot and Surrey, who were unlikely to favour Catesby, a member of the disgraced Beauchamp affinity. But the progress of the dispute in the years 1397–9 reveals an important weakness which undermined the new hierarchy. Even though medieval justice notoriously favoured those who had power and influence, it was not entirely subservient to tyranny. From the outset of the dispute, Catesby had invariably won his case against the Cardians.¹²¹ Although the Cardians claimed that this was due to Catesby's

¹¹⁷ TNA JUST 1/1514, m.1. The following year, Clodeshale was again mainperned to keep the peace. His mainpernors on this occasion included Richard Ruyhall: TNA KB 27/562, *Rex*, m. 2. By 1417, Clodeshale was an officer of Richard Beauchamp: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 686.

¹¹⁸ TNA JUST 1/1514, m. 1; WCRO CR 1886/798. As the younger son of the Beauchamp man Henry, Geoffrey Ardern came from the nearby manor of Park Hall, which meant he was ideally placed to intervene in the dispute: *VCH Warwicks*, iv, p. 45. He seems in general to have been a disruptive influence in the region and became involved in the Russell–Clinton dispute: below, pp. 232–3.

¹¹⁹ TNA JUST 3/188, m. 14; above, pp. 201–2. ¹²⁰ Above, pp. 116–17.

¹²¹ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 313–19, 330; Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, pp. 29–38.

legal wiles and the support he received from Warwick, the consistency with which the inheritance was awarded to Catesby, both at common law and in equitable jurisdiction, suggests that he had the more watertight claim.¹²² Even when the Cardians sought the help of Surrey and Bagot, Catesby was still able to recover his lands at common law. This appears to have been partly the result of Surrey's ineffectiveness and partly because of the jurors' and judges' resistance to his heavy-handed attempts to influence a case that was clear-cut in the eyes of the law.

On Warwick's fall in July 1397, the Cardians brought an assize of novel disseisin against Catesby; Catesby successfully defended his rights.¹²³ After Catesby himself had suffered the forfeiture of his goods in August, the Cardians tried another route. This time they petitioned the king directly. As a result, Catesby was summoned before the king and council on 13 October. By this time, Surrey was already taking an interest in the dispute, since it was at the house of his agent, Hugh Lutterel, that Catesby was presented with the writ of summons. At this session of the council were the king's knight Sir William Arundel, who had landed interests at Brandon (Warwickshire) and Sir William Beauchamp, whose position at this time was ambiguous, but who was probably sympathetic to Catesby, a former member of the Warwick affinity.¹²⁴ But even here, the case was thrown out and the Cardians were instructed to find resort at common law. Undeterred, they sued out another writ of redisseisin. By now, William Bagot had become involved once more. Catesby alleged that it was Bagot who was behind an empanelment of the assize jury which favoured the Cardians. According to Catesby, the jury was empanelled at Bagot's stronghold of Baginton by the sheriff Robert Goushill (who was Mowbray's man) and the under-sheriff William Ilshawe (who had links to both Bagot and Mowbray).¹²⁵ This story is plausible because the assize was to be heard at the superior eyre in Coventry, not far from Baginton, and in a region where Bagot's influence, strengthened by royal authority, was almost paramount.¹²⁶ But even Bagot could not assist the plaintiffs' attempt to adjourn the hearing or prevent the court from refusing to accept this prevarication and non-suiting the Cardians. A week later, the Cardians brought a third assize, but were again non-suited, to the exasperation of the royal justices, who fined them 100 shillings. Bagot then took matters into his own hands. According to Catesby, this was because Bagot realised that the assizes would not serve his purpose of ousting

¹²² Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 331–3.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 337.

¹²⁴ For Arundel: above, pp. 156–7; for Lutterel: above, p. 209.

¹²⁵ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 320; above, pp. 153–4. ¹²⁶ Above, p. 157.

Catesby. Bagot's ploy was to choose two go-betweens with connections to the Beauchamp affinity, Guy Spyney and Ailred Trussell, who proposed a loveday to Catesby. Catesby's legal knowledge stood him in good stead, however. He refused Bagot's proposal on the grounds that both the chancellor and the king's council had already referred the case to the common law. This argument thwarted Bagot's attempts to influence the case more directly through a loveday. According to Catesby, Bagot 'departy ove malencolie'.¹²⁷

As we have seen, Surrey's agents had already been supporting the Cardians. With the consistent failure of the Cardians' suits, the duke decided to take direct action. Shortly after Christmas 1397, Catesby was summoned by his associate Thomas Purfrey to appear before Surrey's council at Coventry to argue his case there. Catesby complied, and asked William Arundel and Hugh Lutterel to speak to the duke so that the latter would be aware of all the facts. Notwithstanding Catesby's compliance, Surrey supported the Cardians' direct action against Catesby. In late 1397, they entered the manor, accompanied by a 'lancegay' of eighteen men which was led by Surrey's chamberlain, Robert Clifton. In order to secure their possession of the manor, the Cardians then enfeoffed it to Surrey, Surrey's uncle, the duke of Exeter, and Bagot. Catesby promptly sued out two more assizes. In the meantime, he also attempted to put pressure on Surrey for a resolution by talking to the duke's steward, Nicholas Gascoigne. Gascoigne, however, prevaricated, saying that he could do nothing without Surrey's specific orders. In fact, Surrey was still intent on supporting the Cardians. In February 1398, Catesby was informed that the duke had appointed William Hull (alias Baker) as bailiff for Ladbroke. At the same time, a court was held there, presumably on Surrey's behalf.¹²⁸

In February 1398, Catesby's prospects of recovering his properties looked very remote. The Cardians had found powerful allies in Bagot and Surrey, the representatives of the royal affinity, and what they had not been able to achieve through legal means, they had taken through violent disseisin, backed up with Surrey's intervention and an enfeoffment. However, on 22 February Catesby's assize was held at Warwick. The Cardians' son-in-law, William Hathewick, tried to claim that the properties were held jointly by enfeoffment with Surrey, Exeter and Bagot, who were not named on the writ. The jurors were unimpressed by Hathewick's powerful connections and his failure to produce his evidence, and found that the defendants had been solely seized of the manor on the day the writ was issued.

¹²⁷ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 320. ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

Furthermore, they found that Catesby had been unjustly dispossessed and awarded recovery of the properties with damages of twenty shillings.¹²⁹ This was the third reversal the Cardians had suffered in six months, despite the very different political conditions which had prevailed from July 1397. The findings of the assize in February 1398 are particularly significant. The jurors were not overawed by the potential power of Surrey and Bagot, and returned the same verdict as all their predecessors had done. It is possible that Catesby tried to rig the jury, but it is likely that his opponents, who had control of the sheriff and under-sheriff, would have been able to accomplish this far more successfully. His ability to retain his lands in times of a political reversal may have been partly the result of his own skills, and partly the result of Surrey's inability to impose himself fully on the region. Even with Bagot's power in the region and direct interference in the case, the jury would still not co-operate. It is significant that the jury seem to have found according to the law as they perceived it, and it is not impossible that their decision may have been an act of defiance against the perceived and growing royal attacks on the common law and the property which it protected.

From 1398 to 1399, however, Catesby was still not secure in his possession of the Ladbroke inheritance. It was only the king's fall in 1399 and the restoration of Warwick to his estates that gave Catesby relief and brought about a final settlement of the affair.¹³⁰ In early 1399, a further attempt was made to oust him. Guy Spyney, who was now Surrey's receiver-general in Warwickshire, arrived at Ladbroke with a group of men, bringing a deed of enfeoffment with Surrey's seal. Spyney took livery of the manor on behalf of the dukes of Surrey and Exeter and menaced those tenants who protested. The following month, a court was held in the duke's name and a bailiff appointed. On this occasion, the attempt was foiled by Catesby's constable. In retaliation for the constable's resistance, the 'Trymenells of Harbury', the former Beauchamp well-willers, destroyed the close at Ladbroke.¹³¹ After this, Catesby petitioned the duke, pointing out that the judgement of 1398 had awarded the manors to him, and asking either for the duke to withdraw from the case or for another hearing before his council.¹³² Evidently, and surprisingly, Surrey acceded to the request for his council to hear the case, and a panel of the

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ One tactic which the Cardians employed was to arrange a public statement, made before the notary public and other witnesses, concerning a deed vital to their claim which had previously been found a forgery. The statement claimed that the confession of forgery had been made under duress and that the deed of entail which was at the centre of the controversy was not a fake: *ibid.*, pp. 321–2, 325–6, 336–8; below, p. 235.

¹³¹ Above, p. 203.

¹³² Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 338–9.

most distinguished judges in the country was brought together for this purpose. In June 1399, they announced that the inheritance belonged to Catesby and the only resort his opponents should have was to be through the common law.¹³³ Once again, Catesby was vindicated but, before Surrey could react, Bolingbroke invaded. Since the fate of Catesby's lands had been at the mercy of the political vicissitudes of 1397–9, he took a keen interest in the events of 1399–1400, and noted with considerable satisfaction that Surrey's badges, which had been placed over the gate of Warwick castle, were torn down by Bolingbroke.¹³⁴

The course of the Ladbroke dispute in the period 1397–9 clearly demonstrates the problems with which Surrey was faced. Although he supported Catesby's opponents, relatively humble jurors and the greatest justices in the country alike consistently found for Catesby. The dispute represents in microcosm the insoluble problems at the heart of Richard II's rule. Whilst he sought to bend the country to his will, he also created opposition through his cavalier attitude to the unspoken constitutional and legal framework, which could be bent but not broken, and from the many subjects alienated by his policies. Richard could not impose his style of rule on the country without provoking opposition, and neither could his local representative, Surrey. Just as Surrey found it impossible to fly in the face of the susceptibilities of regional political society and the judicial system alike, so the king could not rule without reference to the common law or the unspoken but nevertheless potent customs and rules that protected his subjects from interference by arbitrary acts of royal will.¹³⁵ It is not surprising, therefore, that there was mounting opposition to the king. As we have seen, whilst Catesby was able to conduct a defence of his property through legal means, others resorted either to deliberate non-cooperation or to acts of violence directed against the representatives of the regime. Whilst many men found it easier to withdraw from public life during this period until a suitable opportunity presented itself, some preferred a more direct approach and it is to this opposition that we now turn.

Some opposition to the new regime took the form of guerrilla activity, and was aimed particularly at the Beauchamp parks and chases which Surrey had acquired. In July 1398, Surrey sued out a commission of oyer and terminer, complaining that there had been illegal hunting at Sutton Coldfield, Wedgnoek, Claverdon and Haselor.¹³⁶ As we have seen, there

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 302–4.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 323–4; above, pp. 208–9.

¹³⁵ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 204, 224–5; above, pp. 19–21.

¹³⁶ *CPR 1396–9*, p. 434.

had already been trouble at Sutton Coldfield in 1397, when two members of the Beauchamp affinity were accused of murder there.¹³⁷ Warwick himself had suffered from similar attacks on his parks and chases throughout his rule, particularly in his northernmost park at Sutton Coldfield, where his influence was at its weakest. He had sued the culprits, who were often led by members of the gentry, in the courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas.¹³⁸ No doubt he also used his powers as sheriff to punish such malefactors in Worcestershire. That Surrey felt the need for the more powerful instrument of a commission of oyer and terminer suggests both that the attacks had become more sustained as they took on political significance and that he was unable to control them through more ordinary methods, which necessitated the co-operation of the sheriff, even though he was one of the leading lords in the region.

There was also further violence in Worcestershire. John Russell's circle had become openly involved in the trouble at Eldersfield, which has previously been contested by William Russell (possibly supported by Despenser) and Richard Bredon (supported by Warwick).¹³⁹ In 1398, John Vampage's servants were named in pleas of trespass by Richard Bredon and in presentments by the grand jurors to the superior eyre. As we have seen, Vampage was closely connected to John Russell politically and by kinship and, from January 1397, he was also escheator of Warwickshire.¹⁴⁰ It seems that John Russell and the group connected to him aroused considerable resentment in the region once dominated by Warwick, and it is noticeable that, despite Russell's power, he could not prevent the grand jurors from bringing indictments against Vampage's servants, although Vampage himself was apparently immune to prosecution. But he was not immune to physical violence. In May 1398, while he was holding the office of escheator, Vampage was killed at Pershore by Thomas Kyngton.¹⁴¹ There is some evidence to make a link between the Beauchamp affinity and Kyngton, who came from the region where Warwick was most dominant. He seems to have belonged to the ranks of yeomen who tended to serve as jurors and tax collectors.¹⁴² Although

¹³⁷ Above, pp. 213–14.

¹³⁸ For example: TNA CP 40/531, m. 525; CP 40/539, m. 430.

¹³⁹ Above, pp. 168–70.

¹⁴⁰ TNA KB 27/550, m. 6d.; KB 27/551, m. 36; CP 40/539, m. 557; Vampage acted as feoffee to Russell in 1397 and 1398: *CCR* 1396–9, p. 227; TNA CP 25/1/260, m. 55; above, pp. 158–9.

¹⁴¹ *List of Escheators*, p. 178; TNA KB 27/553, Rex, m. 14; JUST 3/73/1, m. 2; JUST 3/189, m. 9. Kyngton was indicted both by Vampage's widow and before the JPs. He was eventually acquitted at gaol delivery in 1400.

¹⁴² He is probably to be identified with the Thomas Kyngton who was a juror at the view of frankpledge at Pershore in April 1395, and a juror for the hundreds of Doddingtree and Pershore in 1397. His name can also be found in a witness list for a grant of land to Alexander Besford,

the cause of his quarrel with Vampage is obscure, it is significant that this was the second murder to have taken place in Pershore in seven years, the first being that of Russell's bailiff in 1392. The borough of Pershore was one of the main market towns in south Worcestershire, and must have been a regular meeting place for members of the local gentry.¹⁴³ With the continuing tensions between the Beauchamp affinity and Russell's men, clashes were becoming inevitable whenever they came into contact.

A less violent form of protest was adopted by former administrative officers of Warwick who found themselves working for new lords. When the Beauchamp estates were carved up, most of the magnates chose to keep the officials who had worked for Warwick. Although Surrey demoted Thomas Knyght, Warwick's receiver-general, replacing him first with his own man Bertram Chisell and then with Warwick's former retainer Guy Spyney, the rest of the administration was left largely intact.¹⁴⁴ There is no information regarding Mowbray, Despenser or Salisbury, although it is possible that they followed this practice, too.¹⁴⁵ Of course, there were considerable advantages in continuing to employ Warwick's officers; they knew the lands and administrative practices needed to keep the Beauchamp estates running smoothly, as well as the manorial bailiffs and many of the tenants. To have replaced them all would have led to inefficiency and confusion. It may be indeed that the new lords had little choice but to keep the running of the Beauchamp estates in the hands of Warwick's former officers.

Since the multiple responsibilities of the new West Midlands nobility meant that they could not exercise the immediate lordship which was necessary to build up an entirely new administration or affinity.¹⁴⁶ They were very reliant on the men they had left in place. But the Beauchamp officers do not seem to have accepted the changes willingly. Whilst they continued to carry out their duties, the surviving accounts for 1397–9 suggest that they did so only in the most perfunctory manner. Where the accounts under Warwick had been meticulously presented, and expenses

the Beauchamp retainer, at Besford in 1394: TNA SC 2/210/72, m. 10; JUST 1/1034, mm. 1, 3; HWRO 970:5:32. A Thomas Kynngton had been farmer of Claverdon for Warwick at the time of Warwick's forfeiture in 1397, although it is less certain whether this was the same man who was accused of the murder. If it was, it strengthens the link with the Beauchamp affinity: *CIMisc* 1392–9, pp. 159–69.

¹⁴³ For the earlier murder in Pershore, above, p. 170.

¹⁴⁴ WCRO CR 1886/481. Knyght still continued in the administration after his demotion. Other Warwick officers who continued under Surrey included Simon Benet: BL Eg. Ch. 8655.

¹⁴⁵ There are surviving accounts from the Despenser portion of Warwick's lands, but unfortunately these are very badly damaged, and no reference to the officers he was using has survived: TNA SC 6/1122/13.

¹⁴⁶ Above, pp. 197–8, 208.

and income extensively documented, the accounts produced for Surrey contain only the bare minimum of information, if any at all, and are full of deletions.¹⁴⁷ The impression given is that Warwick's ministers were going through the motions. It is also possible that they were doing their best to ensure that the new lords received as few profits as possible. This is despite the fact that Surrey was trying hard to apply pressure to the administration. For example, the receiver-general was held responsible for arrears of £37 6s 8d, despite the fact that he had been pardoned this debt by Warwick and his council.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, there were complaints about the exactions made by the new lords: in 1399, John Mountford petitioned Warwick, complaining about the activities of Spyney, who had demanded a higher farm for Mountford's meadow of Packmore.¹⁴⁹ But the combination of the attempts by the nobility and the king to milk the Beauchamp lands and a lack of effective lordship only added to the resistance and resentment felt by Warwick's officers. In 1399, the usurped receiver-general, Thomas Knyght, with the controller of the household, Robert Huggford, and his chamberlain, John Danyel, were key figures in Warwick's rescue and the seizure of his lands.¹⁵⁰

The final element in the resistance by the Beauchamp affinity to the Ricardian regime came in the person of Richard Beauchamp, Warwick's son and heir. Beauchamp was born in 1382 and thus in his late teens at the time of his father's downfall. In the 1390s, he seems to have spent time at court and was married before 1397 to the daughter of Thomas Lord Berkeley. This alliance may have taken on increasingly political overtones, since it seems that Berkeley was under threat in Gloucestershire from the emerging power of Thomas Despenser.¹⁵¹ By 1397, Beauchamp's capabilities as a leader of men must already have been emerging, and the king clearly recognised him as a threat. The fact that he retained Beauchamp's esquire and close associate Walter Power in 1398 suggests that he was either trying to prevent the young man turning against him or undermining his independent position.¹⁵² Beauchamp and his wife,

¹⁴⁷ For example, compare the accounts for Beoley: BL Eg. Ch. 8658 (1391–2), 8655 (1397–8).

¹⁴⁸ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', p. 227.

¹⁴⁹ WCRO CR 1886/481; A. Dunn, 'Exploitation and Control: The Royal Administration of Magnate Estates, 1397–1405' in M. Hicks (ed.), *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 32–3, 40–1; below, p. 231.

¹⁵⁰ Below, pp. 224–5.

¹⁵¹ Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 81–4; R. Hanna III, 'Sir Thomas Berkeley and his Patronage', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), pp. 888–91, especially his comment that 'Richard went out of his way to erode the Berkeley power base' (p. 890); Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 442–3.

¹⁵² CPR 1396–9, p. 418. Power had first been retained by Warwick in 1383. The terms of his retainer were increased in 1394: CPR 1381–5, pp. 277–8; CPR 1391–6, pp. 464–5. In 1399, he was described as Richard Beauchamp's esquire: BRL Miscellaneous 168245; Appendix 1. For

meanwhile, were placed in the custody of Surrey but, curiously, the duke does not seem to have taken Beauchamp with him to Ireland in the autumn of 1398. Nor does the king appear to have included him amongst the group of hostages (which included the heirs of Bolingbroke and Gloucester) whom he himself took with him to Ireland in June 1399.¹⁵³ In hindsight, this was a serious mistake on the part of the king and Surrey, since Beauchamp, with Power, played an active part in supporting Bolingbroke's coup in August 1399.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps Richard, who was Beauchamp's godfather, thought that he had won over the young man; perhaps Beauchamp was old enough and determined enough to be able to refuse to go to Ireland in 1398–9, preferring to stay near his father's forfeited estates.¹⁵⁵

Although Warwick himself was in exile, his son may have acted as a focus both for the Beauchamp affinity and for those discontented with the Ricardian regime in the region. Despite the king's possible attempts to bind the young heir to him, Beauchamp had no reason to support the king and every reason to back any attempt to usurp him. Even if Richard was planning to rehabilitate the dispossessed heirs of the disgraced Appellants, two factors would have prevented this policy from working. First, the Beauchamp lands, like all the Appellant estates, had not only been forfeited in their entirety, regardless of any entails, but they had also been granted to Richard's supporters in tail male.¹⁵⁶ If Richard had been intending to restore the heirs of the disinherited, it would have been very difficult for him to have done so using the original lands of the Appellants without alienating the new nobility. Second, whatever Richard's intentions, to Richard Beauchamp, Bolingbroke and the other disinherited nobles and their followers, the situation would have appeared permanent and they were unlikely to wait for a distant possibility of restoration.¹⁵⁷ Nothing that the king had done had suggested either that he could be trusted or that the settlement of 1397 was only temporary. Richard Beauchamp and his followers had a very real grievance against the king and, if given the opportunity, were likely to resort to extreme measures in order to regain the Warwick lands. Their opportunity came when, in late June 1399, with the king in Ireland, Bolingbroke landed at Ravenspur.

Richard Beauchamp's career: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 360–98, esp. pp. 397–8; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 81–4.

¹⁵³ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 219–20; above, p. 195.

¹⁵⁴ Below, p. 225. ¹⁵⁵ www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1841.

¹⁵⁶ Above, pp. 195–8.

¹⁵⁷ Note also the support given to Bolingbroke by another member of this group, Arundel's heir, who joined Bolingbroke in exile: Saul, *Richard II*, p. 407.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

The fortunate survival of two accounts made by the Beauchamp officers for the years 1399 to 1400 allows a unique insight into the activities of the Beauchamp affinity in July and August 1399.¹⁵⁸ After his landing close to the Lancastrian estates, Bolingbroke moved southwards. By 2 July, Kenilworth Castle had been seized by Lancastrian retainers. According to John Catesby, Bolingbroke was at Coventry on 23 July and at Warwick the following day, where, as we have seen, he caused the badges of the king and the dukes of Exeter and Surrey to be torn down. According to the accounts of the receiver-general, Warwick Castle was seized by Bolingbroke, and was then held by Warwick's men, led by Robert Huggeford.¹⁵⁹

Bolingbroke's intentions towards Richard II are apparent in his actions in Warwickshire in 1399. In not only seizing Warwick Castle but also throwing down the symbols of the new political order, he sent a message both symbolic and practical to Warwick and his supporters. Bolingbroke was making it clear that he opposed the 1397 settlement and, in doing so, was appealing for Warwick and his affinity's support and tacitly sanctioning his escape from the Isle of Man. These events took place several weeks before Bolingbroke openly declared his intention of removing Richard, but, by giving Warwick the opportunity to return to his lands, Henry was making it much harder to achieve a compromise with Richard. The king could not and would not forgive Warwick, and Warwick's experiences meant that he was unlikely to support anything less than Richard's removal from power. In other words, Bolingbroke can hardly have expected that Warwick and Richard could ever coexist peacefully. On the other hand, Bolingbroke needed Warwick and his affinity's support at a time when the political balance had not yet fully swung towards him, and the best way to secure it was to reverse the 1397 settlement. Once Warwick was free, however, his voice would have been added to the growing clamour for Richard's deposition, which was essential ammunition for what turned out to be Bolingbroke's ultimate goal.

Whilst it has become common recently to emphasise that the supporters of Richard did attempt to fight for him – for example, Robert Russell, the sheriff of Worcestershire, was in the duke of York's army summoned to face Bolingbroke – it is much less well known that the Beauchamp affinity also sprang into action in support of Warwick and Bolingbroke.¹⁶⁰ The activities

¹⁵⁸ BRL Miscellaneous 168245; WCRO CR 1886/481.

¹⁵⁹ BRL Miscellaneous 168245; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 323–4; Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 214; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 232. A recent, detailed account of the events of 1399 can be found in Biggs, *Three Armies in Britain*.

¹⁶⁰ For recent research on this, above, pp. 10–12. For example, Thomas Clinton and Thomas Astley both raised troops for Richard in Warwickshire, but William 'Dastelley', Thomas' kinsman, was in Bolingbroke's army: *Chronicles of the Revolution*, pp. 251–3. For Russell, see Biggs, *Three Armies*

of the Beauchamp affinity involved three distinct but interconnected aims: the rescue of Warwick from the Isle of Man, the seizure of the Beauchamp estates and military support for Bolingbroke's campaign. According to the information provided by the accounts of the earl's collector of rents at Warwick, Nicholas Lyllyng gave orders for men and horses to be dispatched to the Isle of Man to meet Warwick. At least one of these horses came from William Spernore's manor of Spernall, whilst the men who went to rescue Warwick were led by John Danyel, Warwick's chamberlain. This was an act fraught with danger since the terms of Warwick's perpetual imprisonment had laid down that his escape would be punishable with death and suggests that Warwick knew that Bolingbroke would claim the throne. Meanwhile, two Beauchamp men were sent to make hurdles to afforce the 'garretz' of Warwick Castle.¹⁶¹ The accounts of the restored receiver-general, Thomas Knyght, add to this picture of rapid movement. They are dated from 4 July 1399, the day he thought Bolingbroke arrived in England. From July to September, men were sent round the Beauchamp estates to reclaim seisin, although in this they were not always successful. Gower, for example, although it was initially claimed by Warwick's men, remained with the Mowbrays. This was convenient for the king since Thomas Mowbray died abroad in September 1399 and custody of the young heir and his lands reverted to the crown. The men involved in the reclamation of the Beauchamp patrimony appear to have been drawn from the lower-ranking members of the Beauchamp affinity, such as the esquires John Raines and Henry Haytley, but Thomas Knyght, as the overall head of the administration, was also involved.¹⁶² All these activities required money, and this was raised by loans from the men of Coventry and from Edward Mettley, an associate of John Catesby.¹⁶³ Finally, Richard Beauchamp, accompanied by his esquire Walter Power, rode to Cheshire on 27 August to give military aid to Bolingbroke.¹⁶⁴

in Britain, p. 137. Biggs also makes the point that many of those mustered in York's army had former allegiances to Richard's opponents and soon melted away to join Bolingbroke: p. 138. It is possible that the Beauchamp affinity may have known of Bolingbroke's plans in advance, but this can never be proved because the nature of the communications between them and the exiled Henry would necessarily have been very secretive.

¹⁶¹ WCRO CR 1886/481; Mott, 'Richard II's Relations with his Magnates', pp. 71–3; Bennett, *Revolution of 1399*, pp. 154–9.

¹⁶² BRL Miscellaneous 168245; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 51–2; Archer, 'Mowbrays', pp. 15–20. Richard Beauchamp was eventually awarded custody of Gower for life in 1405.

¹⁶³ Mettley was clearly trusted by the new regime, as he makes his first appearance on the Warwickshire peace commission in November 1399: *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 565. His links with Catesby went back to at least 1389, and in 1397 he was a co-defendant with him in the Ladbroke dispute: *CFR 1383–91*, p. 270; *CAD IV*, p. 291; v, p. 50; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 322, 334–5. He may also have been linked more directly to the Beauchamp affinity: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 687.

¹⁶⁴ BRL Miscellaneous 168245.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

Following Richard's deposition on 30 September 1399, the new king was faced with two serious problems. First, no matter how intolerable Richard's rule had become, he was still the anointed king and Henry was still a usurper. Nor was Henry's claim to the throne completely watertight. In 1399, Mortimer was passed over because he was too young but, as he began to grow up, he would become a focus for discontent with Henry's rule.¹⁶⁵ Henry's grasp on the crown was very shaky, therefore, and was further threatened by a second problem, the dearth of active, adult magnates. There were minorities in the FitzAlan, Mowbray and Mortimer families; Gloucester's heir was his daughter, who was married to the very young and inexperienced earl of Stafford; and Warwick was growing old. This situation meant that Henry was forced to rely on the two northern earls, Northumberland and Westmorland, who had supported him in 1399, and their families. This meant that he needed men who had risen to prominence under Richard, including the Hollands, Thomas Despenser and the earls of Rutland and Salisbury. Although Henry could not be seen to allow these men to keep the lands and titles they had acquired during Richard's tyranny, they suffered little other penalty, and Henry seems to have been keen to integrate them into his rule. As the evidence from the West Midlands will show, he was even prepared to sacrifice Warwick's interests to achieve this. The precariousness of Henry's position was soon brought home to him by a series of rebellions, beginning in 1400 with the rebellion of the *duketti* and the Cheshiremen whose aim was to put Richard back on the throne. Subsequent rebellions by the Percys in 1403 and 1405 gave further shocks to the Lancastrian regime, and it was not until c. 1406 that Henry's position began to look more secure.¹⁶⁶

Warwick was present at the deposition proceedings; he had been summoned as the earl of Warwick, which suggests that to some extent he had already had his position confirmed by Henry, even before Richard had been formally deposed.¹⁶⁷ His position under the new king was anomalous, however, because of his confession in 1397, which could be interpreted as co-operation with the now-disgraced Ricardian regime and an admission that opposition to Richard was wrong. Once more, Warwick had to explain himself to the new king and parliament, and he

¹⁶⁵ Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 223–5; Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 418–21; *Chronicles of the Revolution*, pp. 171–89.

¹⁶⁶ McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings*, pp. 59–77; A. L. Brown, 'The Reign of Henry IV: The Establishment of the Lancastrian Regime', in S. B. Chrimes, C. D. Ross and R. A. Griffiths (eds.), *Fifteenth-Century England, 1399–1509* (2nd edn, Stroud, 1995), pp. 1–11; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 360–4. For a summary of the events of the rebellion by the *duketti* see D. Crook, 'Central England and the Revolt of the Earls, January 1400', *BIHR*, 64 (1991), 403–10. For the linked rising in Cheshire: P. McNiven, 'The Cheshire Rising of 1400', *BJRL*, 52 (1970), 375–96.

¹⁶⁷ *CCR* 1396–9, p. 521; *RP* III, p. 416.

was granted a special pardon by Henry, on the grounds that he had been wrongly convicted of treason and that he had only confessed under threat of a horrible death. In addition, his long years of loyalty and ‘sound government’ were also taken into consideration.¹⁶⁸ In questioning Warwick’s action, Henry was able to deflect any criticism which might have been levelled against him for his roles as both Appellant and Counter-Appellant. Now that he was king, he did not want to encourage further rebellions by drawing attention to his complicity in the destruction of Arundel and Gloucester or in opposing Richard in 1387–8 and 1399. On the other hand, Henry’s insecure position meant that he needed Warwick’s support in the localities, so the scene in parliament both allowed him to act as the gracious forgiving king and to clarify Warwick’s position on his own terms.

Despite Warwick’s official pardon and restoration to his estates, he was not immediately restored to his full powers, especially in Worcestershire.¹⁶⁹ Henry’s policy was to attempt to balance Warwick’s power with men from the Ricardian regime and from his own Lancastrian affinity. The shrievalty of Worcestershire, with Worcester Castle, which had been seized by Richard in July 1397, remained in Henry’s hands. In fact, Robert Russell, John Russell’s kinsman, who had been pricked as sheriff in November 1398, was allowed to continue to hold the office until February 1400 along with his role as JP despite the fact that he had raised troops against Bolingbroke in 1399.¹⁷⁰ Although, like Richard, Henry was keen to promote his own power in the region, he also wanted to accommodate Richard’s former allies. This is particularly noticeable in the new peace commission issued in November 1399.¹⁷¹ Whilst the two demoted *duketti*, Salisbury and Despenser, were omitted – as was fitting since they were now no longer major local landowners – together with Despenser’s man Thomas Brugge, the commission was more notable for its continuity with the personnel introduced by Richard than for any political changes. Thomas Percy earl of Worcester remained, in recognition of the part his family had played in Henry’s seizure of the throne. The Lancastrian John Blount also remained, as did the royal justices, who had been undisturbed

¹⁶⁸ *RP* III, p. 436; *Usk*, p. 195.

¹⁶⁹ Biggs has argued that Henry treated Warwick favourably from the outset of the reign. Whilst Warwick returned to take his place in central government, the local evidence reveals that this was only part of the story: D. Biggs, ‘The Reign of Henry IV: The Revolution of 1399 and the Establishment of the Lancastrian Regime’, in N. Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* 1 (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 199–200.

¹⁷⁰ Above, pp. 198–9; *LEI* 9, p. 157; *HP* IV, pp. 255–6; *Chronicles of the Revolution*, p. 250.

¹⁷¹ *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 566. The commissioners were: Worcester, Hugh Burnell, Thomas Belne, John Blount, Henry Bruyn, John Cassy (assize justice), John Hull, Hugh Huls (assize justice), John Russell, Robert Russell.

by the usurpation. More surprisingly, considering he had only narrowly escaped the reaction against the Ricardian regime with his life, John Russell was also included.¹⁷² Henry's support in the county was further strengthened by the reappointment after an absence of six years of Hugh Burnell, who had had connections with the Lancastrian affinity before 1399.¹⁷³ The only complete newcomer was Thomas Belne, a legal man and MP for Worcester. Most notably of all, Warwick himself was not appointed to the commission. The new king possibly thought that the earl was too old and weak to take the lead in the region as he needed him to, so reinforcements were drafted in instead.¹⁷⁴

In Warwickshire, Warwick was reappointed immediately to the peace commission.¹⁷⁵ But, as in Worcestershire, the new king took precautions to ensure that the earl could not be all-powerful in the region and that local responsibility did not fall solely on this perhaps now frail man. With Mowbray dead and his son a minor, and the Stafford interest still not re-established, Warwick was the only prominent magnate in the region, apart from the king himself, who now held the Lancastrian inheritance. This meant that the Lancastrian affinity had become a ready-made royal following. Henry used this to strengthen his control in the region by appointing Lancastrian retainers from Leicestershire as sheriffs between August 1399 and November 1402.¹⁷⁶ Members of the Lancastrian affinity and supporters of the Lancastrians also began to appear on the peace commissions. In November 1399, Hugh Burnell was appointed to the Warwickshire bench for the first time, as was Sir Thomas Rempston, whose principal landed holdings were in the north midlands.¹⁷⁷ The two other new JPs were Thomas Sayvill, who had been a sergeant-at-arms under Richard II for several years, and Edward Mettley, who had links with John Catesby and possibly with Warwick.¹⁷⁸ Apart from these

¹⁷² Russell was captured in 1399, but escaped death by feigning madness: *HP* IV, pp. 248–51.

¹⁷³ In 1399, Burnell was amongst the delegation sent to the Tower to receive Richard's renunciation: *RP* III, p. 416.

¹⁷⁴ Belne had previously acted as an attorney and steward to the bishop of Worcester from 1388: *HWRO* 705:7/38; *TNA JUST* 1/1480, m. 13. He also became a trustee of John Russell's lands in 1399: *TNA CP* 25/1/260/25, m. 47. He was MP for Worcester between 1390 and 1399: *HP* I, p. 724.

¹⁷⁵ *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 565. The commissioners were: Warwick, Hugh Burnell, William Astley, Thomas Astley, John Catesby, Robert Goushill, Edward Mettley, Thomas Purfrey, Thomas Rempston, Thomas Sayvill, William Thirnyng (assize justice), Robert Tirwhit (assize justice).

¹⁷⁶ *L&I* 9, p. 145. They were: John Berkeley, Henry Neville and Thomas Maureward: *HP* II, pp. 199–200; III, pp. 7–56, 819–20. Neville had also been sheriff in 1395–6; above, pp. 161–2. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 366–7; D. Biggs, 'Sheriffs and Justices of the Peace: The Patterns of Lancastrian Governance, 1399–1401', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* (1996), pp. 151–2.

¹⁷⁷ *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 565; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 90; for Burnell's earlier career, above, pp. 121, 137, 152.

¹⁷⁸ For Sayvill, see Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, pp. 54–5. For Mettley: above, p. 225, n. 163.

changes, the commission remained very similar in composition to that appointed under Richard II; both Catesby and Thomas Purfrey kept their places, as did Robert Goushill.

During the first months after his release and restoration, Warwick seems to have been concerned mainly with settling his affairs. In October 1399, he settled Barnard's Castle (Durham) on Richard Beauchamp and his heirs and in November he quitclaimed his part of the Bassett inheritance to feoffees. In February 1400, he also granted 'Ladbroke's manor' in Tanworth to feoffees. These enfeoffments were in preparation for the lands to be settled on himself and his wife and their heirs, a matter which was duly performed in May 1400.¹⁷⁹ Warwick was now in his sixties and it is likely that the rigours of imprisonment under William le Scrope had done little to lengthen his life. He seems to have been concerned to secure those parts of his inheritance which had been more recently acquired and which might be contested, with the possibility in mind that his son and heir might succeed him as a minor. In particular, the Bassett inheritance was causing controversy between the rival claimants, although the Beauchamp portion should have been safe from this.¹⁸⁰ His grants to his son of some of the outlying Beauchamp estates also suggest that Warwick was already beginning to transfer some responsibility to his heir. Nevertheless, Warwick's infirmity should not be overemphasised. He still had an important part to play in supporting Henry IV against the rebellion of the *duketti* in January 1400 and it was not until October 1400 that he finally withdrew from public life.

Although Warwick was old and increasingly weak, in January 1400 he sent Simon Benet to Northamptonshire to raise troops to support Henry against the Earls' Rebellion.¹⁸¹ Once Henry had lost his fight to placate the *duketti*, it seems that the combination of this demonstration of Warwick's energy and the fear of further rebellion persuaded the king to reinstate the earl to his full regional powers. On 11 February, Warwick was regranted the hereditary shrievalty of Worcestershire and immediately appointed his own man John Morant to the office of deputy.¹⁸² The earl took the opportunity offered by the return of his shrievalty to exert his power once more in the region. In May and October 1400, he was present in person at the sheriff's tourn.¹⁸³ He also signalled his continuing support for Henry by sending men to fight against the Scots and the French in the north.¹⁸⁴ In June, Warwick's rehabilitation was completed

¹⁷⁹ *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 163; *CCR 1399–1402*, pp. 92, 113.

¹⁸⁰ Rawcliffe, *Earls of Stafford*, p. 12; for the Bassett lands: above, pp. 41–2.

¹⁸¹ BRL Miscellaneous 168245. ¹⁸² *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 56; *L&I* 9, p. 157.

¹⁸³ TNA JUST 3/189, mm. 10d., 11. ¹⁸⁴ *Foedera* III, p. 177.

when he was included on the peace commission for Worcestershire. The composition of the commission did not change significantly apart from this. Worcester and Russell were still included, but Walter Cokesey, who had been omitted since 1397 because of his links with Warwick, was also restored.¹⁸⁵ The earl and his affinity were once more becoming a dominant force in West Midlands politics, but, at Warwick's death in April 1401, the process of the reassertion of power by either the king or earl was far from complete. This was the result of the continuing insecurity of Henry's position which precipitated rebellion in Wales and by the Percys. These national problems in turn fed local instabilities left over from the previous reign.¹⁸⁶

In the West Midlands, the overthrow of the Ricardian regime was followed by an upsurge of complaints which had hitherto remained unvoiced for fear of retribution. These ranged from legal actions and petitions to seizure of property, and, in the most extreme cases, murder. Some of these complaints were easier to resolve than others. A notorious figure such as William Bagot could be singled out for harsh punishment. He was imprisoned in the Tower and action was taken against him in parliament. This show trial was complemented by completely new indictments taken before the JPs in Warwickshire (who included John Catesby), accusing Bagot of the theft of muniments from an unknown location in 1396. The abbot of Stoneleigh also brought an action against Bagot for waste on his manor of Morehall.¹⁸⁷ The king himself showed that he was alive to the importance of Baginton as a centre for Bagot's activities. Although Bagot's feoffees were allowed to take seisin of the rest of his properties in January 1400, Baginton remained in the king's hands.¹⁸⁸ While Bagot was in prison, it appears that some local residents took the opportunity for revenge through a series of attacks on his other properties.¹⁸⁹ More importantly, the charges brought against Bagot in 1396 for corruption and maintenance of the Hendemans were revived, as were those against the Hendemans for murder, demonstrating perhaps that Henry was taking another opportunity to distance himself from the

¹⁸⁵ *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 566. For Cokesey: above, p. 200. The full commission was: Warwick, Worcester, Burnell, Thomas Belne, John Blount, Henry Bruyn, Walter Cokesey, John Hull, Hugh Huls, John Russell, Robert Russell.

¹⁸⁶ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 360–4.

¹⁸⁷ *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 178; *HP II*, pp. 99–103; *Chronicles of the Revolution*, pp. 210–12. Bagot was finally released from imprisonment in the Tower in November 1400: *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 224. By 1402, he was already beginning to rebuild links with the Beauchamp affinity: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 337–8.

¹⁸⁸ *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 97; above, pp. 157, 183.

¹⁸⁹ TNA CP 40/563, mm. 343d., 661. There were attacks on Wolston, Merston and Draycote.

deposed king by permitting the prosecution of Bagot, one of Richard's closest advisers.¹⁹⁰

In the wake of the deposition, other complaints emerged against the depredations of Bagot and Guy Spyney. In 1399–1400, the clerk John Mountford petitioned Warwick. He complained that Bagot had extorted 10 marks from him and had caused him to be indicted in King's Bench for his part on the attack on the abbot of Evesham's property in 1376. It was now that he alleged that Spyney, as an officer of Surrey, had increased the amount due from Mountford's farm of the herbage of Packmore meadow in Warwick. Mountford's woes had been compounded by the damage caused to his property by Richard II's troops passing through Warwick on their way to Ireland. As a result, Mountford asked the earl to pardon him from payment of his farm. Mountford's request was granted, and the matter was closed.¹⁹¹

Unfortunately for both the king and Warwick, not all grudges and disputes from the previous reign could be so easily resolved. The problem for both Henry and Warwick was that settlements imposed or orchestrated by Richard II could not always be easily overturned. Once Richard fell, there were further outbursts of violence as revenge was taken, but the situations which led to these tensions were not always clear-cut. This dilemma was exacerbated by the fact that Henry could not afford to alienate valuable support by imposing unpopular settlements, whilst Warwick's influence, although it was beginning to be re-established, was not yet sufficient for him to control the situation, either. With the outbreak of the rebellion in Wales in 1400 and the Percy rebellions in 1403 and 1405, Henry's attention was often focused solely on keeping his throne, not on imposing order. As a result, it was not until the worst crises in Wales and with the Percys had passed that, from c. 1405, order in the West Midlands began finally to improve.¹⁹² Nevertheless, Henry did have some initial success in resolving local disputes.

The most serious threat to local order was the dispute between Sir John Russell and Sir William Clinton concerning the Clinton lands, which Russell had held through his marriage to Clinton's step-grandmother.¹⁹³ As soon as political circumstances had changed and Russell was in temporary disgrace, Clinton seized the opportunity to take the lands he believed were rightfully his. This action presented the new king with a dilemma. In November 1399, Henry had restored Russell to some of the grants made to him by Richard and had apparently decided that Russell

¹⁹⁰ TNA KB 27/554, *Rex*, mm. 3d., 10; above, pp. 181–4.

¹⁹¹ WCRO CR 1886/481; above, pp. 211, 222. ¹⁹² Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 362–4.

¹⁹³ Above, p. 210.

posed no threat to the new regime. Legally speaking, the Russells did have a very firm claim to the Clinton lands, but it was an agreement that had been reached in a period of tyranny which Henry had recently condemned. In addition, Clinton was the heir to one of the more powerful baronial families in the West Midlands. To antagonise him would be dangerous. In fact, in 1400, the king retained Clinton for life.¹⁹⁴ This only added to the complexities of the situation, for Clinton could now appeal to Henry's good lordship. As a result of the Russells' and Clinton's petitions, Henry reacted to the situation with a combination of arbitration and hearings in chancery. Unfortunately for the king, efforts to reach a settlement were hampered by the disputants' unwillingness to reach a compromise, and, as we shall see, it was not long before the dispute turned violent.

The first attempt by the king to resolve the dispute was in response to the Russells' petition, made before 24 November 1399. The Russells complained that, although Clinton had twice agreed in chancery to their tenure of the lands, he had seized their properties at Maxstoke, Shustoke and other lands with goods worth 400 marks. The endorsement of the petition records that the king sent letters close to the chancellor ordering that the matter be heard, so that Henry could understand the Russells' grievances more clearly. At the same time, the sheriff of Warwickshire was ordered to return the lands to the Russells, and Clinton was ordered to accept the settlement.¹⁹⁵ Clinton was not prepared to submit, however, for on 28 May 1400 he was mainprised for 500 marks to keep the peace towards Russell. Clearly, Clinton had powerful friends; his mainpernors included Reginald Lord Grey and John Lord Lovell.¹⁹⁶ But this surety did not prevent Clinton or his followers from committing further acts of violence. On 7 June 1400, David Somery, the servant of John Russell, was murdered at Maxstoke, by Geoffrey Ardern and Robert Shipecy. The evidence suggests that these two were associated with Clinton.¹⁹⁷ Ardern was the younger son of the former Beauchamp retainer, Sir Henry, and the younger brother of the Beauchamp esquire, Ralph. He seems to have had no ties with Warwick, however, perhaps because he was a trouble-maker.¹⁹⁸ Although it is unclear exactly what his connection to Clinton

¹⁹⁴ *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 400.

¹⁹⁵ *TNA C 81/593/1029B, 1029A; CCR 1399–1402*, pp. 2–3.

¹⁹⁶ *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 197.

¹⁹⁷ *TNA KB 9/185/1*, mm. 43–4. It is significant that the murder took place at Maxstoke, one of the manors under dispute. This adds to the evidence that Ardern and Shipecy were acting for Clinton.

¹⁹⁸ The murder of Somery was not the first time that he had been linked with a violent episode in the region. In 1393, he had been accused of an attack on Warwick's chase at Sutton Coldfield:

was, there was certainly a link between them, since Ardern also appears in the other local dispute involving Clinton concerning Aston Cantlow.¹⁹⁹

The government's reaction to the murder of Somery was swift, and shows that it, too, thought that Clinton was behind the death. On 25 June Clinton was forced to take out yet another mainprise not to harm Russell or his men. Three days later, Russell and Clinton each bound themselves to recognisances of 500 marks apiece, with a defeasance on the condition that they would abide by the award of the named arbiters. The arbiters were men with links to the crown, but with few local associations, and included the king's knight Sir John Cheyne and the royal clerk John Prophete.²⁰⁰ Clearly, the king was hoping to facilitate a centrally backed settlement of the dispute. Meanwhile, the murder case was removed into King's Bench. This arrangement provided only temporary respite, however. Within a few months, the provisions for arbitration had broken down, and both Russell and Clinton were suing each other in chancery for the unlawful breach of their covenant. In May 1401, Clinton was once more forced to provide a bond for his good behaviour to Russell.²⁰¹ The following year he lost a plea against Russell for the payment of the recognisance.²⁰² After this, it seems that Clinton admitted defeat, since no more is heard of the dispute. It is possible that the two men came to some understanding. Although Russell died in 1406, his widow continued to hold Maxstoke until her own death in 1423.²⁰³

Clinton's involvement in the second serious dispute in the region, focused on Aston Cantlow, was less direct. In February 1400, Sir William Beauchamp was granted a commission of oyer and terminer to deal with an alleged break-in at the manor by the prior of Maxstoke and Robert Shippey. This was undoubtedly the same Robert or Richard Shippey, Clinton's servant, who was to be implicated in the murder of Russell's servant later that year.²⁰⁴ Beauchamp had recently acquired the manor of Aston Cantlow as part of the Hastings inheritance.²⁰⁵ In the 1390s, there had been a dispute between the prior of Maxstoke and the prior of Studley concerning presentation rights to the church at Aston Cantlow. In 1395, the new bishop of Worcester, Tideman of Winchcombe, had confirmed that the presentation rights had descended from the Hastings

TNA CP 40/531, m. 525; above, pp. 214–15. He had acted as a feoffee to John Holland in November 1399, which suggests some links with the court: WCRO CR 1886/798.

¹⁹⁹ Moreover, Clinton stood surety for Ardern in 1401: TNA KB 27/560, *Rex*, m. 120; below, p. 234.

²⁰⁰ CCR 1399–1402, pp. 134, 193–4. ²⁰¹ CCR 1399–1402, pp. 280, 286, 392.

²⁰² TNA KB 27/565, m. 63. ²⁰³ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 314.

²⁰⁴ CPR 1399–1401, p. 218; Shippey is described as Clinton's servant in yet another case, this time in the murder of Sir John Knyveton in 1402: TNA KB 27/565, m. 32d.

²⁰⁵ CPR 1399–1401, p. 218; VCH *Warwicks*, III, p. 36.

family to the priors of Maxstoke.²⁰⁶ Possibly, Beauchamp had attempted to interfere in this dispute, or in the affairs of the prior of Maxstoke more generally, and this had resulted in the attack on his manor.

Clinton's interest in the welfare of the priory of Maxstoke stemmed from the fact that the foundation of the priory was the work of one of his ancestors.²⁰⁷ His involvement in the dispute on behalf of the prior is confirmed by the accounts of the priory. These also shed considerable light on the workings of the local judicial system. Following the attack on Beauchamp's manor, a loveday at Henley-in-Arden was arranged. Meanwhile, the prior attempted to influence the commissioners of oyer and terminer. A payment of 13s 4d was made to two esquires of William Thirnyng (the justice appointed to the commission). Payments were also made to Robert Shippey 'and his associates ... for Aston', to John Catesby (another commissioner) for legal advice, to Geoffrey Arden for riding to Studley and to Clinton himself. It seems that Clinton defaulted on the loveday, and that a decision favourable to Beauchamp was returned, since the accounts record two payments of £40 and £10 to Beauchamp. On this occasion, the arbitration seems to have resulted in a permanent settlement. Beauchamp suffered no more attacks on his property.²⁰⁸

Like the Clinton-Russell affair, the long-running dispute over the manor of Aston was also brought to conclusion by royal intervention after 1399, although in this case, the intervention was less even-handed. This was because one of the disputants, William Holt, was a king's esquire.²⁰⁹ King Henry became directly involved in the dispute, because, as we have seen, the manor had been enfeoffed to John of Gaunt, William Bagot and others by Bagot's sister.²¹⁰ Although Henry should have had no direct interest in the manor after the death of his father, the fact that William Holt was a member of the royal affinity persuaded the king to make an arbitrary grant of the manor to William. This grant was the more unusual because William was not the eldest son or heir to the manor; his elder brother John was effectively passed over. Against the support of the king, and of the powerful feoffees who still had an interest in the manor, Holt's rival John Drayton could do little, although he did attempt to bring an assize of novel disseisin against them, but to no avail, since the defendants simply turned to the king for help.²¹¹

²⁰⁶ TNA C 263/2/1 (no. 1); BL Add. Ch. 21419. ²⁰⁷ *VCH Warwick*, II, pp. 91–4.

²⁰⁸ TNA SC 6/1040/1. Although the prior attracted the king's displeasure for obstructing the appointment of a king's clerk to the church of Aston Cantlow: TNA KB 27/567, m. 72

²⁰⁹ Holt was described as a 'king's esquire' as early as 6 October 1399, when Henry granted him the manor of Aston: *CPR 1399–1401*, p. 9.

²¹⁰ Above, pp. 177–8.

²¹¹ TNA JUST 1/1514, m. 37d.; *VCH Warwick*, VI, p. 60; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 362.

Warwick took no part in the resolution of these disputes, partly because they mostly involved men who were not members of his affinity, and partly because he was still in the process of re-establishing his own authority in the region. He was more concerned to secure his own estates and the inheritance of his son than to assert his authority on a wider basis. But in the dispute concerning Ladbroke, which did affect the earl's interests directly, a resolution was also reached. In June 1399, judgement had been given in favour of Catesby by a panel of leading justices. Warwick's actions in the following year were intended to confirm this judgement and bring a final resolution to the dispute, which had lasted for over fifteen years. In this, his task was made easier by Bagot's disgrace.²¹² In February 1400, Warwick enfeoffed his 'Ladbroke's manor' at Tanworth to a group of his most trusted men, including Thomas Aldebury, Ailred Trussell, John Danyel and William Spernore.²¹³ The transaction was given extra force by the inclusion amongst the feoffees of the two leading local barons in favour with the king, Hugh Burnell and William Beauchamp.²¹⁴ With the force of the Beauchamp affinity behind him, Catesby was finally secure in his possession of the Ladbroke inheritance. The Cardians seem to have admitted defeat, and after 1399–1400, no further law suits or actions concerning either of the manors under dispute appear.

From October 1400, Warwick disappears from the records and on 8 April 1401 he died, leaving his son and heir still, though barely, a minor.²¹⁵ Although the new Lancastrian regime was far from stable, and was to face further rebellions, Warwick had begun the task of re-establishing himself locally, a task that was completed triumphantly by his son.²¹⁶ His death drew little attention from the chroniclers, but Adam of Usk remarked that he was 'a man of most kindly nature'.²¹⁷ Whatever his shortcomings, he was also clearly a man who inspired considerable loyalty amongst his retainers. Several members of his affinity served him throughout his career: William Spernore, Nicholas Lylyng, Peter Holt, Walter Cokesey, John Danyel, Walter Power.²¹⁸ Whilst there were some defections, notably Sir John Russell and Guy Spyney, the core of his affinity stayed loyal to him even when he was imprisoned, and it was they who helped make his rescue and rehabilitation possible. From these men were drawn

²¹² Above, pp. 230–31.

²¹³ Warwick bought this manor in 1388: above, p. 42.

²¹⁴ *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 113; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 294.

²¹⁵ *CIPM 1399–1405*, pp. 159–74.

²¹⁶ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 360–6.

²¹⁷ *Usk*, p. 226. The monk of Evesham also recorded Warwick's death: *Historia Vitae*, p. 170.

²¹⁸ Appendix 1.

Richard II and the Rebel Earl

Richard Beauchamp's guardians and officials.²¹⁹ Whilst some of them died shortly after Warwick, others lived on to see the re-establishment of the Beauchamp power and influence, and the rise to national prominence of Earl Richard, who served three Lancastrian kings with exemplary loyalty, and who had the fortune never to be forced by them into the rebellion which had so nearly destroyed his father.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Walter Power and Thomas Aldebury were appointed guardians to Beauchamp in August 1401: *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 371. For the continuing service given by these men: [Appendix 1](#).

²²⁰ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 360–98.

CONCLUSION

At the start of this book, several questions were asked: how did the polity of late fourteenth-century England work; what were the roles of the nobility and the king; how did Richard's rule fit into these structures; what were Richard's attitudes and policies towards his rule; were they consistent throughout his reign; and what part did they play in his downfall? The analysis of the expectations and experiences of the earl of Warwick in his rule of the West Midlands has shed new light on the politics of the period, and it should now be possible to venture some answers to these questions, although, in the absence of extended local studies for most other regions in this reign, these conclusions must remain incomplete for now.

This book has shown that the polity of late fourteenth-century England was very similar to the model already shown to exist in the fifteenth century, even if the final element, the role of the JPs in local politics, was perhaps only coming into view in the late 1380s or early 1390s. It was a similarly hierarchical model in which the gentry normally looked to the nobility, and, above them, the king's authority was supreme. The relationship between the king, nobility and gentry was symbiotic: the king was reliant on the landed power of the nobility and gentry to carry his rule into the localities, and the gentry and nobility looked to the king to defend the realm, to protect their landed property and to maintain order. But, as Warwick's experiences in the West Midlands demonstrate, the successful functioning of the polity was inherently reliant on the king using his theoretically absolute power in a manner which did not subvert this delicate balance. Whilst Warwick's rule in the West Midlands in the late 1370s caused an element of local disorder because he overstepped the accepted limits of lordship, these problems were limited compared to the scale of disruption unleashed by Richard's interference in the region from the mid 1380s.

At first, however, Richard was more concerned with the position in politics occupied by John of Gaunt. As this analysis of West Midlands politics has shown, the unique and considerable influence of Lancaster was pervasive. From the mid 1370s, he used his landed power and position as the nominal head of the royal family to prop up the regime both centrally and locally. His style of rule was aimed at stamping out perceived or actual local disturbances by the use of intrusive central commissions coupled with annual excursions of King's Bench. Lancaster's power, which was drawn both from his public authority and his private landed resources, could not easily be withstood, as Warwick found to his cost when he attempted to assert his own rule locally in a rather clumsy manner. As Richard II began to grow up, he, too, was confronted with Lancaster, who was his uncle, but with whom he had little else in common. Unfortunately, the king's method of dealing with Gaunt did not bode well for his future rule. By 1384–5, their struggle for power had led to Richard's alleged involvement in court-based plots against his uncle. These tensions were reflected in conflicting central policies concerning the rule of the localities. By mid 1384, Richard's personal rejection of Lancaster himself had become intimately bound up with his rejection of Lancaster's style of government. After this date, Richard's gradual emergence and the duke's decreasing influence at the centre are paralleled by the drop in the use of central commissions and King's Bench. This is somewhat surprising, since we might assume that this form of rule was the obvious agency by which Richard could extend his control over the localities. His complete rejection of this policy suggests the extent of his alienation from Gaunt at this time. From 1387, however, Richard began to change his mind, as he discovered that King's Bench could be used to attack his perceived enemies; in the 1390s, Lancaster's policy of more direct royal intervention was fully reinstated. Crucially, contrary to the assumptions of Putnam or the 'war-state/law-state' interpretation of the fourteenth century, the role of the JPs can be seen to be not yet fully developed in this period. Their power waxed and waned according to the demands of royal judicial policy, and they do not seem to have become central to local politics until the 1390s, when Richard attempted to make them an instrument of direct royal intrusion into local politics.¹ Perhaps Richard's removal of the magnates and their stewards in 1389 and the need to restore them in 1390 is the first clear evidence that the JPs were becoming central to local order and local politics.

If Richard's rule in the West Midlands was not initially based on the intrusion of royal power further into the region through the judicial

¹ Above, pp. 12–13.

Conclusion

system, neither was he concerned to increase the power of his own supporters there as an alternative to Warwick's rule. As we have seen, the emergence of Beauchamp of Holt had no adverse effect on the power structures in Worcestershire, and Warwick certainly did not see him as a rival. Although this is a subject that awaits further investigation, it can be suggested that Richard was concentrating his power, together with that of his friends, in other strategically important parts of the country.² Whilst these policies may have worried Warwick, it was not until 1385 that he himself was directly threatened by Richard's rule. It seems that Warwick and Richard had never got on. They belonged to different generations and their views on foreign policy and the war were irreconcilable, even if they did share a common dislike of Lancaster. From 1385, this simmering antipathy began to deteriorate into actual hostility on the part of the king, and this became fully apparent in his aggressive activities and attack on Warwick's influence in the West Midlands in the summer of 1387. It may be that the trigger for this change was the way in which Richard dealt with the murder of Ralph Stafford, Warwick's nephew. By November 1387, Warwick had been pushed into rebellion as a means of self-defence.

How does Warwick's experience fit into the context of Richard's wider policy towards rule at this time? As we have seen, it was not until 1385 that Richard began to treat the earl as a personal enemy and used a variety of weapons against him, such as the judicial system and the formation of his own retinue at Warwick's expense to attack the earl's local influence. Warwick was not alone in his experiences, however. The king's hostility to the earl is echoed in Richard's attitudes towards other members of his nobility before this date, particularly those who dared to criticise his rule. The king's deteriorating personal relationship with Lancaster, Gloucester and Arundel has been well documented, and from what we know of central and local politics in this period it seems that Richard was prepared to adopt increasingly authoritarian tactics against them, including threatening them in their own centres of power.³ Even before Richard and Warwick became alienated from each other, there are signs that the king had a wider policy towards the nobility, although in every case it began with personal antagonism before moving to a more structural undermining of their local rule. Even if these attitudes did not yet amount to tyranny, they were certainly at odds with the fundamental principles on which the polity operated: the monarch's duty to advance

² Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 9–15; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 62, 74–84; above, pp. 103–6.

³ Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 9–15, 108–14; Tuck, *Richard II*, pp. 62, 74–84; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 172–81; above pp. 99–103, 123–4.

the common good, which always involved listening to his subjects' needs, and to rule within the bounds of the law which protected their property; and the co-operation of the king and nobility in the actual process of the implementation of government. Fatally, although Richard showed himself to be well aware of the power that land could bestow, he failed to understand that the greatest landowners, his nobility, were his natural allies and therefore unlikely to use their power against him unless they were forced into a position in which they had no alternative. From 1382, Richard was already beginning to show that that he was willing to override the laws and customs of the realm, including those which protected his subjects' landed property and those which governed the customary processes of rule in the shires. By 1387, he had crossed the Rubicon: in 1386–7 his rule had become an active threat to the lands and the very lives of his subjects. His policies alienated the political classes, whose landed influence was so vital to his ability to rule effectively. The result was that in 1387–8 there were few members of the nobility or gentry who were willing to support him or his friends.

Although it has become common to assume that Richard learnt from his experiences in the 1380s, and modified his rule accordingly, the evidence from the West Midlands shows that, far from ruling in a harmonious or successful manner, Richard changed only his tactics, not his attitudes. Nor was his policy about bringing peace to the shires. In fact, there is considerable evidence that he was following a consistent policy towards governance, first seen in its embryonic form in the period 1382–7, in which he was attempting in some parts of the country to exclude from local rule those magnates whom he did not trust in favour of his own friends. Following the Appellants' rebellion, he now had every cause to doubt their loyalty, even though it was he himself who had precipitated their opposition in the first place. Where in the 1380s he had been inserting 'outsiders' into the local power bases of his opponents, in some parts of the country, if the West Midlands is anything to go by, in the 1390s he worked within the existing power structures by recruiting both magnates and gentry into his own affinity and using them as an alternative source of local rule, in this case to Warwick and his affinity. At the same time, he used the rhetoric of the parliamentary Commons' complaints about liveries and maintenance as a weapon with which to humiliate and undermine his opponents. As a result of these policies, Warwick and his affinity became increasingly isolated and alienated. Although it is impossible to know whether Richard intentionally planned to revenge himself on the former Appellants, or whether he was acting out of fear occasioned by the events of 1387–8, either way the corollary of his rule was to make Warwick's local position untenable. By

Conclusion

1396, Richard was planning to remove the earl completely because it was clear that Warwick would not submit tamely to his increasing marginalisation. As far as the West Midlands are concerned, the events of 1397 do not represent a sudden crisis in Richard's rule or a new plot against him. In fact, Richard had been preparing for this since 1390. It is also possible to suggest that this was a more general policy. Even an apparently loyal member of the nobility such as Gaunt found himself under pressure locally, as Walker has shown.⁴ However, whilst Richard could remove Warwick, he could not contend with the continuing loyalties and cohesion of the Beauchamp affinity. His rule in the 1390s only succeeded in compounding existing tensions locally and nationally, thereby alienating more of his subjects, which in turn made it increasingly hard for him to govern because there were so few men he could trust. After his removal of Warwick he began to run out of supporters and, therefore, of local officers in the West Midlands. In this last phase of his rule, he also demonstrated the extent to which he had failed to understand the role of the king as the guarantor of the law when he presided over the forfeiture of the entire inheritances of his opponents, regardless of legal devices protecting them. The final straw was his sequestration of the Lancastrian inheritance in 1399, by which he created not simply another enemy in Bolingbroke, but also a rival for the throne.⁵ Ironically, it was Richard's belief that the nobility were his enemies which turned them into exactly that; his policies had become self-fulfilling. What we know of Richard's policies regarding the rule of the localities and the nobility in the West Midlands is that whilst they may have been piecemeal between 1382 and 1387, they became apparently much more systematic in the 1390s. Richard's attitude and policies towards the nobility, law and property remained consistent from 1382, but he may have become more astute in the 1390s in his attempts to realise them, before unleashing his vision of kingship in full between 1397 and 1399.

The final question which remains to be answered is whether Richard's policies could have worked in the context of the late medieval polity, or whether they were always doomed to fail. In the light of Warwick's experiences in the West Midlands, it is difficult to sustain the argument that Richard's attempt to rule by intruding royal power more directly into the localities made sense or could have worked. Such was the structure of the fourteenth-century polity that Richard should not have needed to rule in this way. The fact that he thought that he could not trust his

⁴ Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 172–81 (royal incursions in Lancashire), 228–34 (North Midlands).

⁵ This interpretation agrees with Stubbs' idea that Richard's rule was only tolerated until a replacement was found: above, pp. 2–3.

magnates and that he needed to replace them with his own friends in order to assert his power suggests that his rule was based on a fundamental misconception of the king's role within the polity. The destructive nature of his rule is plain to see in the crisis of 1387–8, when his policies came close to precipitating his deposition. In the 1390s, the gradual intrusion of the royal affinity into the West Midlands, and Richard's support for its members regardless of their actions, created not better order but increased disruption and the growing alienation of those, like Warwick, who were excluded from government and royal favour. These men were left with no recourse but violence and, ultimately, support for Bolingbroke and Richard's deposition. As we have noted, Richard could not act as a private lord to some men and the king of all without compromising his essential impartiality and ability to act for the common good.⁶ What happened in 1397–9 is crucially important in showing that Richard could not rule without the local power of an established member of the nobility and that the nobility and gentry were far too intermeshed in their relationships for radical intrusion amongst them to work. In Richard's case, the situation was made even worse because he actively sought the complete exclusion from local politics of those men whom he did not trust. Richard's rule was unworkable in the context of the fourteenth-century polity. Combined with his cavalier disregard of the common law and traditions protecting his subjects' property, the very basis of their power, and his belief that he could not trust the very men whose advice and co-operation he most needed, his deposition was not only inevitable, but also necessary, in order to preserve the stability and common weal of the realm.

In conclusion, Warwick was certainly neither quick to rebel nor anxious to seek the downfall of the king for his own ends. Although he was not necessarily the most able of men, neither was he entirely incompetent in his rule of the West Midlands. But without the support of the king he could not hope to succeed. His opposition to Richard's rule in 1387–8 was the result of the increasing royal interference in his affairs, which, from late 1385, became more aggressive. Even so, it still took the personal attack by Richard on Warwick's local influence in the summer of 1387, coupled with his policies of building up legal and practical weaponry to use against his perceived opponents, to push the earl into open rebellion. But provoked as he was, Warwick seems to have preferred to blame Richard's advisers rather than the king himself. As Goodman has commented, Warwick was 'not an ambitious or unscrupulous rebel, but a

⁶ See Castor, *Duchy of Lancaster*, pp. 4–18, who makes this point with reference to both Richard II and Henry IV.

Conclusion

middle-aged man with a life-time of loyalty to the Crown behind him, seeking a safe and honourable deliverance from a novel dilemma'.⁷ There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of this assessment. But if Warwick was slow to rebel, the fact remains that he did raise an armed force against his anointed king. For these actions, Warwick and his fellow Appellants were to pay dearly in 1397–9 but the underlying cause for the desperate nature of their actions lay in the king's fundamental misconception of kingship. This study has shown how much can be learned about the nature and impact of Richard's rule from a close analysis of his relations with one particular noble and one particular region. It remains to be seen how the nature and impact of Richard's rule affected other magnates and other localities.

⁷ Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, pp. 29–30.

Appendix I

THE BEAUCHAMP AFFINITY, *c.* 1369–*c.* 1401

This list has been compiled using as wide a range of sources as possible including the Beauchamp Cartulary, the Beauchamp accounts, the evidence from the Ladbroke dispute and deeds. It includes not only those men who can be shown to have been in receipt of a fee, annuity or grant from the earl, but also those whose names recur in connection to the earl. For example, whilst a single reference to a link with Warwick has not been taken to indicate more than a passing connection to him, continual references to an individual acting in various capacities relating to Warwick's business has been used as evidence of a stronger, if informal link to the Beauchamp affinity. Similarly, where men are listed as receiving fees or annuities, these payments were often only the formal expression of a longer-term relationship. Thus, where deed and other evidence allows, the date given in column (B) for the start of the individual's connection to Warwick is the earliest that he can be shown to have had links with the Beauchamp affinity.

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Name	Date	Residence	Position
Richard Aldebury	1393–1403	?	Officer ¹
Thomas Aldebury	1389–1403	?	Officer; feoffee; councillor ²
William Aldebury	1394–7	?	Officer ³
John Aleyn	1370–91d	Worcs.?	Sub-sheriff Worcs.; feoffee; MP Worcs. ⁴
Thomas Archer	1373– <i>c.</i> 1384	Umberslade (Warwks.)	War ret.; life ret. ⁵
Eleanor Ardern	1380–3	Park Hall (Warwks.) Upper Wick (Worcs.) ⁶	In household of Margaret Beauchamp ⁷
Henry Ardern	1370–82d	Park Hall (Warwks.) ⁸	Feoffee; war ret.; councillor; MP Worcs. ⁹
Ralph Ardern	1395–1420	Park Hall (Warwks.)	Feed ¹⁰

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Name	Date	Residence	Position
John Atherstone	1373–1400	Wyre Piddle (Worcs.) ¹¹	Kinsman; war ret. ¹²
William Bagot	1373–7 ¹³	Baginton (Warwks.) ¹⁴	War ret. ¹⁵
William Barewell	1377–90 ¹⁶	Alscot (Gloucs.)	Receiver-general; sub-sheriff Worcs. ¹⁷
William Beale	1392–9	Parson of Kingsbury (Warwks.)	Feed ¹⁸
Simon Benet	1396–1403	Warwick	Officer ¹⁹
John Bermyngeham	1373–85d	Birmingham (Warwks.)	War ret.; agent ²⁰
Thomas Bermyngeham	1373–82	Birmingham (Warwks.)	War ret. ²¹
Robert Bernard	1395–1400	?	Feed ²²
Alexander Besford	1375–99d?	Besford (Worcs.)	Councillor; MP Worcs. ²³
William Bretton	1370–8d	Packwood (Warwks.)	Feoffee; co-recognitor ²⁴
Robert Brome	1368–1402	Warwick	Councillor; steward; MP Warwick ²⁵
Ralph Bromley	1389–1400	?	Officer ²⁶
Richard Bromley	1377–1402	Parson of Ashby Folville (Leics) ²⁷	Feoffee; officer; councillor ²⁸
Edmund Brugge	1355–79	Harvington and Purshull (Worcs.) ²⁹	Sub-sheriff Worcs; MP Worcs; feoffee ³⁰
Thomas Brugge	1391	Tewkesbury (Gloucs)	Steward ³¹
William Brugge	1377–99	Parson of Martley (Worcs.) ³²	Attorney; receiver ³³
Henry Bruyn	1368–1404	Ab Lench (Worcs.) ³⁴	MP Worcs.; councillor; receiver ³⁵
Thomas Burdet	1385–1411	Arrow (Warwks.)	Feed ³⁶
Robert Burgulon	1372–1401?	Warwks./Staffs.?	Councillor; agent ³⁷
John Burnell	1373–8	Hodnel (Warwks.)	War ret. ³⁸
John Catesby	c. 1384–1400	Ladbroke (Warwks.)	Councillor ³⁹
Stephen de la Chaumbre	1383–93	Warwick	MP Warwick; feed ⁴⁰
William de la Chaumbre	1378–93d	Warwick	Founder of Guild of Holy Trinity ⁴¹
Walter Cokesey	1378–1405d	Great Cooksey (Worcs.)	MP Worcs. ⁴²
William Cokesey	1382–91 ⁴³	?	Agent; councillor ⁴⁴

Appendix I

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Name	Date	Residence	Position
Thomas Crewe	1383–1416	Morehall (Worcs.)	Sub-sheriff Worcs.; officer ⁴⁵
John Danyel	1373–1401	Ashorne (Warwks.) ⁴⁶	Chamberlain; councillor; war ret.; feoffee ⁴⁷
Robert Derlaston	1372–74	Warwick?	receiver ⁴⁸
John Durant	1370–96	?	Officer; war ret. ⁴⁹
John Fulwode	1377–99	Tanworth (Warwks.)	Well-willer? ⁵⁰
Richard Fyton	1371–83d	Frankley (Worcs.)	MP Worcs. ⁵¹
Reginald Hambury	1363–93d?	Hanbury (Worcs.)	MP Worcs. ⁵²
John Harewode	1369–83	Clerk at St John's Warwick ⁵³	Executor; feoffee ⁵⁴
Simon Haversham	1396–1400	?	Officer ⁵⁵
Henry Haytley	1383–99	Warwick	Officer? ⁵⁶
William Hercy	1390–7	Gloucestershire? ⁵⁷	Feed ⁵⁸
John Hermesthorpe	1376–1400	?	Chamberlain of exchequer; councillor; agent; feoffee ⁵⁹
Richard Herthill	1377–89d	Pooley (Warwks.)	Kinsman ⁶⁰
Peter Holt	1362–1401	Studley (Warwks.)	War ret.; receiver; annuitant; councillor ⁶¹
Thomas Hoddington	1393–1406	Hoddington (Worcs.)	Officer ⁶²
William Hopkyns	1377–1401	Warwick	MP Warwick; co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity ⁶³
Robert Huggeford	1395–1411d	Little Comberton (Worcs.) ⁶⁴	Officer; life ret. ⁶⁵
William Hull	1373–99	Warwick	War ret.; MP Warwick ⁶⁶
John Hukyns	1373–87	Wroxall (Warwks.)	Co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity; war ret. ⁶⁷
Thomas Knyght	1391–1403	?	Receiver-general; feoffee ⁶⁸
Richard Kyngton	1372–97	Warwick	Agent; MP Warwick ⁶⁹
William Lewkenore	1373–98	Tanworth	War ret.; officer ⁷⁰

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Name	Date	Residence	Position
Nicholas Lyllyng	1373–1417 ⁷¹	Great Billing (Nhants.) Hadzor (Worcs.) ⁷²	Chief steward; councillor; War ret.; MP Worcs.; feoffee ⁷³
Giles Mallory	1385–97	Northamptonshire	Chief steward ⁷⁴
Richard Martyn	1382–92	Warwick	Co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity; MP Warwick ⁷⁵
Edward Mettley	1397–1401	Hunningham (Warwks.)	Officer ⁷⁶
John Meysey	1378–90	Shakenhurst (Worcs.)	Agent ⁷⁷
Robert Mile	1356–1405	Rector of Chaddesley Corbet (Worcs.) ⁷⁸	Feoffee; councillor ⁷⁹
John Morant	?1368–1400	Stoulton (Worcs.)	MP Warwick; sub- sheriff Worcs. ⁸⁰
John Morehall	1363–1379d	Morehall (Warwks.) ⁸¹	Witness ⁸²
Thomas Morehall	1378–9	Morehall (Warwks.)	Well-willer ⁸³
John More	1376–1403	Wood End? (Warwks.)	Officer; councillor ⁸⁴
William Morton	1363–90	Parson of Elmley Castle (Worcs.) ⁸⁵	Agent; councillor; receiver- general ⁸⁶
John Mountford	1373–99	Warwick	War ret.; co- founder Guild of Holy Trinity ⁸⁷
Richard Mountford	1373	Lapworth (Warwks.)	Co-founder of chantry at Lapworth ⁸⁸
Robert Normanton	1378–98	Preceptor of Temple Balsall (Warwks.) ⁸⁹	Well-willer? ⁹⁰
Stephen Palfreyman	1392–7	?	Feed ⁹¹
John Parker	1384–1402	Weston Underwood (Bucks.) Birdingbury (Warwks.)	Agent; officer ⁹²
William Parys	1373–1403	Great Comberton (Worcs.) ⁹³	War ret.; feed ⁹⁴
Thomas Pavy	1370–84d	Warwick	MP Warwick; co-founder Guild of Holy Trinity ⁹⁵
Richard Piriton	1356–86	Dean of Colchester ⁹⁶	Feoffee; councillor ⁹⁷

Appendix I

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Name	Date	Residence	Position
Walter Power	1381–1403	Avon Dassett (Warwks.)	Life ret.;steward; officer ⁹⁸
Thomas Purfrey	1379–1408	Knightcote (Warwks.)	Councillor ⁹⁹
William Purfrey	1373–99	Churchover (Warwks.)	Councillor ¹⁰⁰
John Raines	1373–99	Warwick?	Chamberlain; war ret.; MP Warwick ¹⁰¹
Thomas Rody	1376–87 ¹⁰²	Warwick	Co-founder, Guild of Holy Trinity ¹⁰³
John Rous	1363–79 ¹⁰⁴	Ragley (Warwks.)	Sub-sheriff Worcs. ¹⁰⁵
John Russell	1377–87 ¹⁰⁶	Strensham (Worcs.)	MP Worcs.; life ret. ¹⁰⁷
Robert Russell	1377–83	Dudley (Warwks.)	Feoffee ¹⁰⁸
William Ruydyng	1394–1401	Warwick?	Officer; MP Warwick ¹⁰⁹
Richard Ruyhall I	1370–2?	Birtsmorton (Worcs.)	Sub-sheriff Worcs.; MP Worcs. ¹¹⁰
Richard Ruyhall II	1376–97 ¹¹¹	Birtsmorton (Worcs.)	Attorney; councillor ¹¹²
	1401–?		
John Sapy	1377–85d	Wyke Sapy (Worcs.)	Sub-sheriff Worcs.; MP Worcs. ¹¹³
John Say	1382–8	Wem (Shrops) ¹¹⁴	Feoffee; councillor ¹¹⁵
Nicholas Scot	1392–7	?	Feed ¹¹⁶
John Sherman	1396–1401	Warwick?	Officer ¹¹⁷
William Spernore	1373–1401d	Spernall (Warwks.) ¹¹⁸	War ret.; feoffee; councillor; MP Worcs. ¹¹⁹
Guy Spyney	1375–98	Coughton (Warwks.)	Feed; councillor ¹²⁰
Nicholas Squiller	1384–1403	?	Feed ¹²¹
Thomas Stafford	1396–1427	Grafton (Worcs.)	Life ret. ¹²²
Edward Stebbyng	?–1371	?	Receiver ¹²³
William Sutton	1392–3	Solihull (Warwks.)	Feed ¹²⁴
Ralph Tangeley	1369–98	Little Inkberrow (Worcs.)	Officer ¹²⁵
Roger Tangeley	1369–1400	Rector of Sutton Coldfield	Feoffee ¹²⁶
Richard Temedbury	1376–7	Tembury (Worcs.)	Feoffee; attorney ¹²⁷
Thomas Throckmerton	1396–1405	Throckmorton (Worcs.)	Feed; constable Elmley Castle ¹²⁸
Ailred Trussell	1393–1400	Nuthurst (Warwks.)	Feed; feoffee ¹²⁹

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Name	Date	Residence	Position
John Trussell	1395–7	Northamptonshire	Feed ¹³⁰
Henry Trymenell	1373–1408 ¹³¹	Harbury? (Warwks.)	War ret.; MP Warwick ¹³²
Nicholas Trymenell	1373–1403	Harbury? (Warwks.)	Feed; life annuitant; officer; war ret.; councillor ¹³³
Richard Trymenell	1383–98	Halesowen (Worcs.) ¹³⁴	Councillor ¹³⁵
Roger Ulbarewe	1369–96	Warwickshire	Attorney; councillor ¹³⁶
Walter Ussher ?	1371–7	?	Feed ¹³⁷
Robert Walden	1377–97 ¹³⁸	Warwick	MP Warwick; councillor; officer ¹³⁹
	1400–1		
John Walet	1392–7	?	Receiver ¹⁴⁰
John Warneley	1385–97	Halesowen (Worcs.)	Feed ¹⁴¹
Nicholas Warrewyk	1387–1401	Warwick	Officer ¹⁴²
John Wasshebourne	1385–1404	Little Washbourne (Worcs.)	Sub-sheriff Worcs.; councillor ¹⁴³
William West	1400–3	?	Officer ¹⁴⁴
William Wenlok	1363–1400	?	Feoffee ¹⁴⁵
Margaret Wiltshire	1369–87	Bradenham (Bucks)	Served Warwick's mother and wife ¹⁴⁶
John Wodelowe	1387–1403	Woodloes (Warwks.)	Officer ¹⁴⁷
Lucy Wodelowe	1385–97	Woodloes (Warwks.)	Feed ¹⁴⁸
John Wodeville	1381–97d	Buckinghamshire	Officer ¹⁴⁹
John Wyard	1376–1401	Alspath (Warwks.)	Feed ¹⁵⁰
William Wynter	1382–1400	Rector of Solihull	Attorney; agent ¹⁵¹
Roger Wyrley	1372–88d	Castle Bromwich (Warwks.)?	Steward of Tanworth ¹⁵²
Thomas Young	1395–7	Deacon of St Mary's, Warwick ¹⁵³	Officer ¹⁵⁴

Appendix I

NOTES

- ¹ HWRO 899:95/4; BL Eg. Ch. 8659; BL Eg. Ch. 8770.
- ² Active as officer by 1389 to at least 1403: BL Eg. Ch. 8656; BL Eg. Ch. 8770; feed as councillor 1392–3, 1395–6: HWRO 899:95/4; TNA SC 6/1123/5; feoffee 1390, 1399–1400: *CPR 1388–92*, p. 307; *CCR 1399–1402*, pp. 92, 113; involved in restoring Warwick, 1399: BRL Miscellaneous 168245.
- ³ BL Eg. Ch. 8659; SBT DR 37/107/6; BL Eg. Ch. 8769. May have left affinity after 1397: in 1398 granted custody of a meadow forfeited by Warwick: *CFR 1391–9*, p. 257.
- ⁴ Appointed sub-sheriff of Worcestershire by Warwick, 1372–7, 1382–3 and May–September 1390: *L&I 9*, p. 157; MP for Worcs. 1370: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 185; feoffee and witness to transactions by Warwick, 1371–85: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 57r, 125v, 135r; SBT DR 37/Box 56; at death in late 1391 also held position of verderer of Feckenham (by Warwick's election): *CCR 1389–95*, p. 417.
- ⁵ Served Warwick abroad, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; granted 100 shillings per annum for life by Warwick from rents in Worcester for past and future good service, 1378: SBT DR 37/Box 56; used Richard Bromley and Roger Tangeley as feoffees, 1377: SBT DR 37/709; married Agnes, daughter of Walter Cokesey: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, pp. 546–7. Fell out of favour with Warwick c. 1384–5 because of his support for Lewis and Alice Cardian against John Catesby and his links with William Bagot: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 314, 316–19, 327.
- ⁶ Daughter and heiress of John Sapy: inherited Upper Wick from him: *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 502–3; married Henry Ardern.
- ⁷ With husband and son Thomas admitted to fraternity of St Albans with Margaret Beauchamp: BL Ct. Nero D VIII, fol. 131v; after husband's death quitclaimed Earl's Croome to William Cokesey, William Spernore, Roger Tangeley and Richard Bromley, 1383: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 146v, 147v.
- ⁸ Granted Park Hall by John Botetourt by 1373: *VCH Warwks.* IV, p. 45; acquired Barcheston, 1375, Curdworth, 1380–1: *VCH Warwks.* IV, p. 62; *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 64.
- ⁹ Regular feoffee, agent and witness to Warwick, 1370–82: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 16r, 21r, 83v, 104r, 100r, 125v; *CCR 1369–74*, pp. 453–4, 549; *CCR 1381–5*, p. 410; in Warwick's war retinue, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39d.; councillor, 1375: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 180v; MP for Worcs. 1381: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 209; married Eleanor, daughter and heir of Sir John Sapy of Upper Wick: *VCH Warwks.* III, pp. 502–3.
- ¹⁰ Son of Henry; feed by 1395: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; used by Henry Bruyn and John Wasshebourne as feoffee, 1400: WCL B 858.
- ¹¹ Granted Wyre Piddle for life by Warwick for good service at 100 shillings per annum, 1381; still holding it in 1399–1400: HWRO 705:962/8; BRL Miscellaneous 168245.
- ¹² Illegitimate half-brother to Warwick: *CPR 1396–9*, p. 282; served in war retinue, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; executor to John Sapy, 1389: *CCR 1389–92*, p. 79.
- ¹³ Dropped from the Beauchamp affinity after Vernon affair; retained by the Mowbrays, 1380–99 and by Lancaster and Bolingbroke, 1382–90s: above, pp. 87–8; Archer, 'Mowbrays', p. 349; Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 263.
- ¹⁴ Purchased 1378–9: SBT ER 1/65 nos. 455, 458, 460.

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

- ¹⁵ Served with Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; admitted to fraternity of St Albans with Warwick, 1377: BL Ct. Nero VIII, fol. 129v.
- ¹⁶ Retained by Lancaster, 1383, with no fee, but to serve him in England: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, pp. 16, 263.
- ¹⁷ Receiver-general by Michaelmas 1377—at least Michaelmas 1381: SBT DR 37/107/1, 2; sub-sheriff of Worcestershire, October 1383–May 1390: *L&I* 9, p. 157. Involved with William Bagot in attack on Juliana Vernon, 1377: *CPR 1377–81*, p. 89; above, pp. 87–8. Used William Hopkyns, Robert Walden, Thomas Rody and Richard Martyn as feoffees, 1383: SBT DR 3/119.
- ¹⁸ Feed in 1392–3, 1396–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; took out general pardon for supporting Appellants, 1397: TNA C 67/31, m. 2.
- ¹⁹ Officer by 1396–7 to at least 1403: BL Eg. Ch. 8769, 8770; involved in activities on Warwick's behalf, 1399: BRL Miscellaneous 168248.
- ²⁰ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; involved in property transactions with Warwick, 1384: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 148v.
- ²¹ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; admitted to fraternity of St Albans with Warwick, 1377: BL Ct. Nero D VIII, fol. 129v; witness to grants by Warwick, 1376: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 110r; BL Ct. Ch. xi 70; sheriff of Warwickshire, 1381–2: *L&I* 9, p. 145.
- ²² Feed, 1395–7, 1399–1400: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; BRL Miscellaneous 168245.
- ²³ MP for Worcs. 1382, 1388, 1391, 1395: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 213; *HP* II, p. 719; feed, 1396–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; witness to transaction involving Warwick, 1375: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125v; daughter Agnes married Thomas Throkmerston: *HP* II, pp. 214–16; removed from verderership of Feckenham, 1393: *CCR 1392–6*, p. 71.
- ²⁴ Regular feoffee and co-recognitor to Warwick and William Beauchamp: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 21r, 104r, 110r; BL Ct. Ch. xi 70; *CCR 1369–74*, pp. 442, 453–5, 546; *CCR 1381–5*, pp. 410, 598. Executors included William Hopkyns; his widow received counsel from Robert Normanton, John Catesby, William Barewell, John Burnell: *CAD* VI, p. 102.
- ²⁵ Councillor, 1383, 1386: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 317; MP for Warwick 1368, 1384: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 181, 224; steward of court at Warwick by 1389 to 1397: SBT ER 1/661/506; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; still connected to Beauchamp affinity in 1402: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 337–8.
- ²⁶ Clerk of Warwick's household by 1389: SBT DR 37/107/4; officer and receiver, 1396–7, 1399–1400: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; BRL Miscellaneous 168245.
- ²⁷ By 1378: WCL B 845.
- ²⁸ Regularly a feoffee and agent, 1377–97: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 67r, 83r, 98v, 147r; *CPR 1381–5*, pp. 157, 222; *CPR 1391–6*, p. 556; *CCR 1381–5*, pp. 409–10; *CCR 1396–9*, p. 125; auditor and officer 1380–97: SBT DR 37/107/2, ER 1/66/506; HWRO 899:95/4; BL Eg. Ch. 8659. Feoffee to Thomas Archer, 1377: SBT DR 37/709; feoffee to Henry Arden and John Sapy, 1378: WCRO CR 1998/48/KK1; WCL B 845. Sinclair gives the end date for Bromley's service: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 322–3.
- ²⁹ Granted Harvington and Purshull for life by Earl Thomas I at £10 per annum, 1357: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 7r, 10r.

Appendix I

- ³⁰ Sub-sheriff 1366–9: *L&I* 9, p. 157; feoffee to Earl Thomas II, 1376, 1377: *CCR* 1381–5, pp. 409–10; MP for Worcs. 1373: *Returns: Members of Parliament*, p. 192. Witness to grant involving Sir William Beauchamp, 1379: *CCR* 1377–81, p. 329; mainpernor to William Spernore, 1378: *CCR* 1337–81, p. 117; feoffee to Henry Ardern and John Sapy, 1378: WCL B 845.
- ³¹ Steward at view of frankpledge at Chedworth, Gloucs.: TNA JUST 3/180, m. 21d.; also served Despenser from c. 1386 to 1400: TNA JUST 3/180, m. 39; Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, pp. 287, 289.
- ³² BL Add. MS 28024, 135r.
- ³³ Attorney to Warwick, 1377: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 410; feed as clerk of household, 1395–6; receiver at Gower, 1396–7: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; attached to Richard Beauchamp, 1396–9: WCRO 1886/481.
- ³⁴ Tenant of Warwick: *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 354–5.
- ³⁵ MP for Worcs.: 1368, 1383, 1385, 1386, 1391, 1401, 1404: *HP* II, pp. 399–400; councillor by 1383 to 1400: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 315; HWRO 899:95/4; TNA SC 6/1074/21; feed as steward of Warwick's Worcestershire estates, 1395–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; TNA SC 6/123/5; receiver to Warwick's widow, 1402–3: BL Eg. Ch. 8770.
- ³⁶ Feed by 1395 to 1397: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 685; links with affinity by 1385 when witnessed a grant of Spennall manor by Guy Spyney to William Spernore: WCRO CR 1998/38/CC3.
- ³⁷ Associated with Henry Ardern, John Harewode, Robert Derlaston, Roger Wyrley as trustees to Charles Blossmenill, 1372–4: TNA JUST 1/1480, m. 15d.; JUST 1/1481, m. 5; witness to grant by Warwick, 1376: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r; councillor in 1383, 1387 and 1392–3 (feed): BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125r; BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 315; agent in Warwick's transactions, 1388–95: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 334; may have been dropped from Worcestershire peace commission because of links with Warwick: he was not used on any local commissions after 1394 until 1401; close associate of John Catesby from c. 1371 to 1398: see for example TNA KB 27/443; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 316–19, 330, 334–5.
- ³⁸ Served with Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; witness to grant by Warwick, 1377: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 410; counsel to Joan, widow of William Bretton: *CAD* VI, p. 102. His indictment before the JPs in 1385 for stealing a necklace from Rose Mountford and threatening her may be connected to the dispute between Rose and William Spernore: above, pp. 84–6.
- ³⁹ Moved into Beauchamp affinity from c. 1384 when Ladbroke inheritance threatened: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 316–17; councillor from 1387, feed, 1392–3, 1396–7 as steward of court in Northamptonshire: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r; BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ⁴⁰ MP for Warwick, 1383: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 216; witness to lease by Warwick, 1384: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 146v; feed, 1392–3: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27.
- ⁴¹ Co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp, 1383: *CPR* 1381–5, p. 268; regular witness to transactions by Warwick, 1378–92: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 16r, 83v, 98r, 98v, 146r, 146v; dead by September 1393, when his son acted as his executor: TNA CP 40/531, m. 365.

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

- ⁴² MP for Worcs. 1378, 1384: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 201, 224: witness to grants by Sir William Beauchamp and Warwick 1379, 1385: *CCR* 1377–81, p. 329; BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 166v.
- ⁴³ In this year described as *domicello* and attorney-general to Thomas Botiller of Sudeley; no further references to him after this date: WCRO CR 136/C/8/307a.
- ⁴⁴ Admitted to fraternity of St Albans in 1383 as Warwick's esquire: BL Ct. Nero D viii, fol. 132r; witness and agent to Warwick's transactions, 1382–8: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 68r, 147r; *CCR* 1381–5, pp. 409–10; granted joint custody of Talbot inheritance with Warwick, 1388: *CFR* 1383–91, p. 233; councillor, 1383: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 315.
- ⁴⁵ Sub-sheriff December 1400–May 1401: *L&I* 9, p. 157; officer to Warwick and widow, 1400–1: BL Eg. Ch. 8663; HWRO 899:95/4; married by 1389 Juliana, daughter and heir of John Morehall: *HP* II, pp. 691–3; acting as trustee to John Say, 1383: TNA CP 25/1/289/53, m. 93; attorney to Nicholas Warrewyk, 1388: TNA KB 27/507, *Rex*, m. 27. May have had friends amongst royal affinity who protected him in 1397: was elected MP for Warwks. for the Revenge Parliament, and, in the same year, was mainperned by William Bagot and Adam Peshale: *HP* I 664–5; TNA KB 27/546, m. 4.
- ⁴⁶ Granted Ashorne for life by Warwick for good service, 1377: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 410.
- ⁴⁷ Chamberlain by 1395 to 1397 and from 1399 to 1401: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BRL 434589; BL Eg. Ch. 8662; SBT DR 37/107/9, 10; councillor 1383, 1396–7, 1399–1400 (feud in 1396–7 at 75 shillings): Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 315; admitted to fraternity of St Albans with Warwick, 1377: BL Ct. Nero D viii, fol. 129v.
- ⁴⁸ Linked with Henry Arden 1372–7 in various litigation: TNA JUST 1/1480, m. 15d.; JUST 1/1481, m. 8; receiver for Warwick 1372–3: BL Eg. Ch. 8625.
- ⁴⁹ Retained for life, 1370 in peace and war: *Private Indentures for Life Service in Peace and War 1278–1476*, ed. M. Jones and S. Walker (Camden Miscellany 32, Camden 5th ser., vol. 3, 1994), p. 84; served with Warwick in France, 1373–4: E 101/32/39; officer by Michaelmas 1377 to after 1382: SBT DR 37/107/1; HWRO 899:95/4. Witness to grants by Warwick in 1384 and 1396: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 68r; Oxford County Record Office Mas.11/1/1: my thanks to Dr A. Dunn for this reference.
- ⁵⁰ Witness to enfeoffment by Thomas Archer, 1377: SBT DR 37/709; chose William Spernore and Peter Holt as arbitrators, 1384; SBT DR 37/768; witness to grant by Warwick, 1388: BL Add. MS 28024; used Peter Holt and Robert Walden as feoffees, 1399: SBT DR 37/823.
- ⁵¹ MP for Worcs. five times between 1370 and 1382: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 185, 190, 194, 198, 211; witness to grant by Warwick, 1378: SBT DR 37/Box 56.
- ⁵² MP for Worcs. 1363, 1383: Driver, 'Worcestershire Knights III', p. 7; held verderership of Feckenham until removed in 1393 because of old age; possibly elected by Warwick as sheriff: *CCR* 1392–6, pp. 26, 56.
- ⁵³ Presented to Warwick, 1374: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 329.
- ⁵⁴ Executor to Earl Thomas I: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 282; BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125v; regular feoffee and agent, 1370–75: *CCR* 1369–74, pp. 442, 453–4, 549; co-feoffee with Henry Arden, 1372–4: TNA JUST 1/1480, m. 15d.; JUST 1/1481, mm. 7–8; JUST 1/1482, m. 5d.; mainprised by Robert Russell, 1383: *CFR* 1377–83, p. 355.
- ⁵⁵ Receiver to Warwick by 1396–7; served him until at least September 1400: BL Eg. Ch. 8769, 8662.

Appendix I

- ⁵⁶ Stood surety for William Spernore, 1383: *CFR* 1377–83, pp. 357–8; involved in seizing Warwick's lands: BRL Miscellaneous 168245.
- ⁵⁷ Appointed to a commission there in 1387: *CPR* 1385–9, p. 322.
- ⁵⁸ Attorney to Nicholas Lylling, 1390: *CCR* 1389–92, p. 168; feed, 1395–7: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ⁵⁹ Beauchamp chamberlain of the exchequer, 1376–96: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', p. 341; agent and feoffee to Warwick, 1390–1400: *CPR* 1388–92, p. 307; *CIMisc* 1392–9, p. 133; *CCR* 1399–1402, p. 113; councillor, 1383, 1386: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 318; feed, 1395–6: TNA SC 6/1123/5.
- ⁶⁰ Married Warwick's illegitimate half-sister: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 286; witness to grant by Warwick, 1377: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 410; used Richard Bromley and Robert Brome as feoffees, 1386: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 112v.
- ⁶¹ Involved in original settlement of Spennall, 1362–3; WCRO CR 1998/38/BB 8; above, p. 85, n. 111; accompanied Warwick to France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; admitted to fraternity of St Albans, 1377: BL Ct. Nero D VIII, fol. 129v; paid £10 per annum from Beoley by 1389 to 1401: BL Eg. Ch. 8655–63; councillor, 1383, 1385: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 315, 319; officer by 1396 to 1401: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; BRL Miscellaneous 168245; TNA SC 6/1074/21; BL Eg. Ch. 8663; witness to transactions by William atte Wode, Thomas Burdet, Guy Spyney: SBT DR 37/2447; SBT ER/61, no. 5; WCRO CR 1998/36/N5, CC3.
- ⁶² Removed from verderership of Feckenham, 1393 (elected by Warwick): *CCR* 1392–6, p. 71; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 324–5.
- ⁶³ MP for Warwick in 1377 and 1401: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 196; *HP* I, pp. 669–70; co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp, 1383: *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 268, 271; regular witness to transactions by Warwick, 1378–88: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 16r, 83v, 98r, 146v; feoffee to William Barewell, 1383: SBT DR 3/119; executor to William Bretton, 1378, *CAD* I, p. 544; collector of rents for John Catesby at Ladbroke, 1386: TNA SC 6/1041/10.
- ⁶⁴ Had been granted to him for life at £6 per annum by Warwick: *VCH Worcs.* IV, p. 61.
- ⁶⁵ Officer by 1395–6: SBT DR 37/107/6; took custody of Warwick Castle in July 1399: WCRO CR 1886/481; retained for life in 1400: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, pp. 195–6.
- ⁶⁶ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; with servant of William Cokesey accused of assault, 1388: TNA KB 27/507, *Rex*, 25; may have served Surrey, 1398–9: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 321, 325–6, 336–7, but elected as MP for Warwick, 1399: *HP* I, pp. 609–10.
- ⁶⁷ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp, 1383: *CPR* 1381–5, p. 268; witness to grant by Warwick, 1376: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 84r; feoffee to Richard Martyn, 1386–7: WCRO CR 26/A/wviii.
- ⁶⁸ Officer by 1391: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 319; receiver-general by 1394: BL Eg. Ch. 8659; replaced by Surrey's men, 1397; led action in support of Warwick and Bolingbroke, 1399: BRL Miscellaneous 168245; feoffee, 1400: *CCR* 1399–1402, p. 125; continued to serve the dowager countess: BL Eg. Ch. 8770.

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

- ⁶⁹ MP in 1372, 1373: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 189, 192; possibly agent to Warwick in transactions concerning the Pecche inheritance, 1386: TNA C 260/99(8); above, pp. 121–2; trustee to John Wyard, 1377: *Wanvickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 70; feoffee to John Olney, 1395, 1397: WCRO CR 1998/1X/492, 497.
- ⁷⁰ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; bailiff of Tanworth by 1387: TNA KB 27/506, Rex, m. 7; took out general pardon, 1398: TNA C 67/31, m. 12.
- ⁷¹ Sinclair gives this end date for Lyllyng's service to the Beauchamps: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 320–1.
- ⁷² Granted Hadzor and Cosgrave (Nhants.) for life by Warwick, probably c. 1383 (the first date on which he acted as MP for Worcs.): *CIPM 1399–1405*, pp. 159–74.
- ⁷³ Chief steward by 1389 to after Michaelmas 1392 (possibly removed as a result of his dispute with John Russell in 1392–3): above, pp. 167–75; SBT ER 1/66/506; HWRO 899:95/4; regularly served as a councillor between 1383 and 1395: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 315, 318; BL Eg. Ch. 8659; served Warwick in France, 1373–4: E 101/32/39; MP for Worcs. seven times between 1383 and 1393: *HP* III, pp. 603–5; regular agent, feoffee and officer between 1376 and 1400: BL Ct. Ch. xi 70; BL Eg. Ch. 8656, 8657, 8662; TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; *CPR 1399–1402*, pp. 92, 113; admitted to fraternity of St Albans with Warwick, 1377: BL Ct. Nero D VIII, fol. 125v.
- ⁷⁴ Feoffee to Margaret Wiltshire, 1385: *A Calendar of the Register of Henry Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester, 1375–1395*, ed. W. P. Marrett (Worcestershire Historical Society, NS, 8, 1972), pp. 224–5; feed by Warwick, 1395–7: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; moved into affinity of the duke of York after 1397, raised troops for Richard, 1399: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 296–8; *Chronicles of the Revolution*, p. 251. But witnessed a retainer for life by Warwick in June 1400: *Private Indentures for Life Service*, pp. 127–8.
- ⁷⁵ MP for Warwick, 1382: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 213; co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp, 1383: *CPR 1381–5*, p. 268; witness and agent to Warwick's transactions 1388–92: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 98r, 98v. Used by Roger Tangeley, William Hopkyns and John Hukyns as trustees, 1386–7: WCRO CR 26/A/wviii.
- ⁷⁶ Loaned Warwick money in 1399: BRL Miscellaneous 168245; close associate of John Catesby from c. 1389: *CFR 1383–91*, p. 270; Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 322, 334–5; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 687.
- ⁷⁷ Involved in Warwick's transactions, 1389–90: *CPR 1388–92*, pp. 80, 307; used by Robert Mile as feoffee, 1378: HWRO 705:126/16; mainpennor to William Wenlok, 1384: *CFR 1383–91*, p. 54.
- ⁷⁸ Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, p. 382.
- ⁷⁹ Attorney to Earl Thomas I, 1356: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 7v; feoffee to Sir William Beauchamp (the overlord of Chaddesley Corbet), 1372: *CCR 1369–74*, p. 468; present at council, 1383: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12; officer 1395–6: TNA SC 6/1123/5; Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', p. 320. Also served bishop of Worcester, 1371–6: HWRO 705:7/39; Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, p. 382.
- ⁸⁰ MP for Warwick, 1368–9: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 181; sub-sheriff February–December 1400: *L&I* 9, p. 157; he became the second husband of Margaret, sister of Thomas Hoddington: Driver, 'Worcestershire Knights III', pp. 8–9.

Appendix I

- ⁸¹ Held Morehall from Warwick: *VCH Warwks.* III, p. 190.
- ⁸² Witness to grant by Warwick to Sir William Beauchamp, 1376: BL Ct. Ch. xi 70; witness to settlements of Spennall by the Spyneys in 1363 and 1375: WCRO CR. 1998/38/BB8; SBT ER. 1/61. Daughter and heir Juliana married Thomas Crewe as her second husband: *HP* II, pp. 691–3.
- ⁸³ Involved with William Spennore, Guy Spyney, Peter Holt and others in attack on his stepmother, c. 1378–9: TNA SC 8/222/11100; above, pp. 84–6
- ⁸⁴ Officer to Warwick by 1390 to 1397 (1395–7, feed as auditor): BL Eg. Ch. 8657, 8658; SBT DR. 37/107/6; TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; auditor again by April 1401–after September 1403: WCRO CR. 1886/483; BL Eg. Ch. 8770; agent and witness to transactions involving Warwick from 1376: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 83v, 84r, 111r, 148v; councillor 1387, 1394–5: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125r; BL Eg. Ch. 8659.
- ⁸⁵ Presented to this living by Earl Thomas I.
- ⁸⁶ Regularly acting as witness and agent to Warwick, 1383–8: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 67v, 97v, 148v; SBT DR. 10/484; councillor 1383–7: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 329; BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125r; receiver-general 1385–6: SBT DR. 37/107/3.
- ⁸⁷ Served Warwick in France 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp: CPR. 1381–5, p. 268; witness to grants by Warwick, 1384–9: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 59r, 78v, 146v.
- ⁸⁸ Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp granted to him and others land in Tanworth for the endowment of daily masses at Lapworth. Mountford and male heirs to have presentment rights to the church with reversion to Warwick and his heirs: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r.
- ⁸⁹ The Knights Hospitallers held considerable land in Warwickshire from the Beauchamps including Balsall itself: *VCH Warwks.* IV, p. 88.
- ⁹⁰ Counsellor to Joan Bretton, 1378: *CAD* VI, p. 102; involved in arbitration of Ladbroke dispute, 1383: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 313–14; loaned money to Warwick, 1395–6: TNA SC 6/1123/5; took out pardon for supporting Appellants, 1398: TNA C 67/30, m. 17.
- ⁹¹ Feed, 1392–3, 1396–7: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ⁹² Granted Birdingbury for life at 40 shillings per annum by William Beauchamp, 1395: WCRO CR. 1998/402; witness to transactions by Warwick from 1384: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 59r, 98r; officer 1395–6: TNA SC 6/1123/5; closely linked to William Beauchamp from c. 1392 to 1401: acting as his steward in 1395: *CCR* 1389–92, p. 539; *CCR* 1392–6, p. 233; *CCR* 1399–1402, p. 116; TNA CP 40/539, m. 307d.
- ⁹³ Before 1401, Warwick had granted him Great Comberton for life: *CIPM* 1399–1405, pp. 159–74.
- ⁹⁴ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; feed by 1397; officer in 1402–3: BL Eg. Ch. 8769, 8770.
- ⁹⁵ MP for Warwick, 1370: *Return: Members of Parliament*, p. 185; witness to transactions by Warwick, 1384: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 59r, 146v; co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp, 1383: CPR. 1381–5, p. 268.
- ⁹⁶ Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12.
- ⁹⁷ Attorney-general to Earl Thomas I, 1356: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 7r; regular feoffee and agent, 1370–84: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 100r, 125v, 148v; CPR. 1381–5, pp. 157,

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

- 222; CCR 1369–74, pp. 108, 322, 442, 453–4, 549. Named as councillor 1383, 1386: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12, 318.
- ⁹⁸ By 1381 had married Margaret, widow of Giles Ardern, kinsman of Henry Ardern: CIPM 1377–84, pp. 188–90 (and above, p. 97); retained for life by Warwick, 1383 at 100 shillings per annum in peace and £10 per annum in war; these rates were increased with a new contract in 1392 to £10 per annum in peace and £20 per annum in war; steward of Warwick's household by 1393 and active as an officer, 1397–7: HWRO 899:95/4; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; *Private Indentures for Life Service*, pp. 103–4, 114–15. Described as 'Richard Beauchamp's esquire' in 1399–1400, feed at 100 shillings: BRL Miscellaneous 168245; guardian of Richard Beauchamp and custodian of Warwick's lands, 1401: CCR 1399–1402, p. 371; CFR 1399–1405, p. 135; receiver to Countess Margaret, 1402–3: BL Eg. Ch. 9770.
- ⁹⁹ Linked to Beauchamp affinity by 1379–80 when used by Henry Ardern and Robert Burgulon as feoffee: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 379; councillor and officer by 1397 to 1397: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125r; BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; TNA E 42/249; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; continued in service of Richard Beauchamp: Sinclair, 'Beauchamp Earls of Warwick', pp. 320–1; associate of John Catesby from c. 1386: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 318–19, 321, 334–5.
- ¹⁰⁰ Feed as councillor, 1392–3: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27.
- ¹⁰¹ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; chamberlain by 1385, when granted 8s 11d for life from lands in Berkswell: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 97r; MP for Warwick 1388, 1392: HP 1, pp. 669–70; active in 1399 in taking seisin of Beauchamp lands: BRL Miscellaneous 168245.
- ¹⁰² Appears to have drifted out of Beauchamp affinity in 1390s: in 1392 was suing Robert Walden in an assize of novel disseisin, and in 1397 a Thomas 'Roude' was granted the keepership of Bearley Park, forfeited by Warwick, for life: TNA JUST 1/1501, m. 43; CPR 1396–9, p. 197.
- ¹⁰³ Co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp, 1383: CPR 1381–5, p. 268; witness to grant by Warwick, 1376: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 84r; feoffee to William Barewell, 1383: SBT DR 3/119; trustee to Richard Martyn, 1386–7: WCRO CR 26/A/WVIII
- ¹⁰⁴ Retained by Gaunt, 1382: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, p. 280.
- ¹⁰⁵ Appointed sub-sheriff of Worcestershire by Earl Thomas I: L&I 9, p. 145; Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 282; feoffee to Sir William Beauchamp, 1372: CCR 1369–74, p. 468; witness to grant involving William Beauchamp, 1379: CCR 1377–81, p. 329; witness to settlements of Spernall on (1) Sybil Durvassall (1363), (2) William Spernore (1375): WCRO CR 1998/38/BB 8; SBT ER 1/61, no. 5; above, p. 85, n. 111.
- ¹⁰⁶ Retained by Richard II, August 1387; Warwick cut off his fee: CPR 1385–9, p. 372; above, pp. 127–8
- ¹⁰⁷ MP in 1378, 1379: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 201, 203; retained for life as Warwick's esquire, January 1377: *Private Indentures for Life Service*, pp. 91; renewed in March 1383: CPR 1381–5, p. 238; witness to grant by Warwick to Thomas Archer, 1378: SBT DR 37/Box 50.
- ¹⁰⁸ Feoffee, 1377: CCR 1381–5, p. 410; mainpernor for John Harewode, 1383: CFR 1377–83, p. 355; later moved into half-brother's circle; above, pp. 158–9.

Appendix I

- ¹⁰⁹ Warwick's parker at Wedgnoek by 1394 to at least 1400: WCRO CR 1886/474, 475; MP for Warwick, September 1399: *HP* 1, pp. 669–70.
- ¹¹⁰ It is difficult to distinguish between father and son, both called Richard, but Richard Ruyhall I was definitely sheriff in 1370–2 and attorney to Warwick in 1370: *L&I* 9, p. 157; *CCR* 1369–74, p. 454.
- ¹¹¹ Also served Thomas Berkeley from c. 1388: *CPR* 1388–92, p. 464; attorney to Thomas Despenser, 1399 and had connections to his affinity from 1397: *HP* iv pp. 261–3.
- ¹¹² Attorney to Warwick, 1382: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 410; councillor 1383, 1392–3: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12; BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; linked with Alexander Besford from 1376: TNA CP 25/1/260/24; *CCR* 1374–7, p. 552. From 1401, reactivated links with Beauchamp affinity: *CFR* 1399–1405, p. 118.
- ¹¹³ Sub-sheriff of Worcs., 1377–82: *L&I* 9, p. 157; MP for Worcs. 1377, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1385: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 197, 209, 211, 213, 227; daughter and heiress Eleanor married Henry Ardern.
- ¹¹⁴ Married by 1381 Elizabeth, heiress of the Botillers of Wem, widow of Sir Robert Ferrers: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 26.
- ¹¹⁵ Regularly a feoffee and mainpinner to Warwick and William Beauchamp between 1382 and 1388: *CPR* 1381–5, pp. 157, 222; *CCR* 1381–5, p. 578; *CFR* 1383–91, pp. 173, 247, 257; present at Warwick's council, 1383: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 311–12.
- ¹¹⁶ BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ¹¹⁷ Warrener for Warwick, 1396–7; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; bailiff of Warwick, 1400–1: WCRO 1886/483.
- ¹¹⁸ Acquired Spennall for life, 1375: SBT ER 1/61, no. 5; above, pp. 84–6; held Perry Barr (Warwks.) from Warwick for life at rose rent: *CCR* 1399–1402, p. 454.
- ¹¹⁹ Served Warwick in France, 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; regular feoffee and witness to transactions by Warwick, 1376–1400: BL Ct. Ch. xi 70; *CCR* 1381–5, pp. 409–10; BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r; *CCR* 1399–1402, p. 113; admitted to fraternity of St Albans, 1377: BL Ct. Nero viii, fol. 129v; councillor, 1383–5, 1392: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 315, 318–19; HWRO 899/95/4; MP for Worcs. 1393, 1394, 1397, 1399: *HP* 1, p. 719.
- ¹²⁰ Linked to affinity by 1375 when witness to settlement of Spennall on William Spennore: SBT E 11/61, no. 5; involved in attack on Morehall with Thomas Morehall: TNA SC 8/222/11100; described as 'Warwick's esquire', 1383, active as councillor, 1387: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 313, 318–19; feed, 1396–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; employed as receiver-general by Surrey, 1398: BL Eg. Ch. 8661.
- ¹²¹ Described as Warwick's servant, 1384: *CPR* 1381–5, p. 465; feed, 1395–7, 1402–3: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769, 8770.
- ¹²² Retained by 1396–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 689.
- ¹²³ Before 1371, he had been receiver to Warwick. In that year he forged a release of land belonging to the Ferrers to Warwick: *CPR* 1370–4, p. 170; *CCR* 1369–74, p. 322, 327, 485–6; above, pp. 67–8.
- ¹²⁴ Feed as valet of Warwick's chamber: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27.
- ¹²⁵ Executor to Katherine Beauchamp, 1369: HWRO b716.093; held Little Inkberrow from Warwick by 1370, with reversion to the earl. Still holding it in 1398, when the reversion granted to Surrey: BL Add. Ch. 20422; *CCR* 1369–74, pp. 453–4; *VCH Worcs.* III, pp. 422–3.

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

- ¹²⁶ Remembered in the will of Katherine Beauchamp, 1369: HWRO b716.093; admitted to the fraternity of St Albans with Margaret Beauchamp, 1380: BL Ct. Nero VIII fol. 131v; presented to Sutton Coldfield by Warwick, 1382: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 642; regularly a feoffee and agent to Warwick, 1382–1400: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 98v, 147r; *CPR 1391–6*, p. 556; *CCR 1381–5*, pp. 409–10; *CCR 1399–1402*, pp. 92, 113; executor to Margaret Wiltshire, 1385: *Register of Henry Wakefield*, pp. 224–5; feoffee to Thomas Archer, 1377, 1385: SBT DR 37/709, 777.
- ¹²⁷ Feoffee and attorney, 1376–7: *CCR 1381–5*, pp. 409–10.
- ¹²⁸ Feed in 1396–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; served Despenser in Ireland, 1399, but by 1401 was constable of Elmley: HWRO 899:95/4. Links to affinity may predate mid 1390s: by 1379 had married daughter of Alexander Besford: WCRO CR 1998/48/KK1; *HP* IV, pp. 609–10.
- ¹²⁹ Feed in 1395–6: TNA SC 6/1123/5; officer, 1399–1400: BL Eg. Ch. 8662; feoffee, 1400: *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 113; took out recognisance with Guy Spyney to Walter Blount, 1393; stood surety for Nicholas Lyllyng: *CCR 1392–6*, pp. 113–14.
- ¹³⁰ TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769; supported Richard in 1399: *HP* IV, pp. 666–9, but witnessed a retainer for life by Warwick in June 1400: *Private Indentures for Life Service*, pp. 127–8.
- ¹³¹ Supported Surrey and the Cardians against John Catesby in the Ladbroke dispute, 1397–99: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 325–6, 338–9.
- ¹³² Served Warwick in France, 1373–4; TNA E 101/32/39; MP for Warwick, 1386, 1388, January 1397: *HP* I, pp. 669–70; feed by Warwick, 1396–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; continued in service to Beauchamps until c. 1408: *HP* IV, p. 510.
- ¹³³ Feed by Warwick, 1396–7 and by the dowager countess, 1402–3: BL Eg. Ch. 8769, 8770; granted 10 marks per annum for life from Warwick and Bereford, 1385: *CPR 1391–6*, p. 31; served Warwick in France 1373–4: TNA E 101/32/39; admitted to fraternity of St Albans with Margaret Beauchamp, 1380: BL Ct. Nero D VIII, fol. 131v; officer 1399–1400: BRL Miscellaneous 168245; councillor 1385: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 317–19; feoffee to Henry Ardern, 1378: WCRO CR 19998/48/KK1.
- ¹³⁴ Witnessed grant by John Warneley as a landowner there, 1377: BRL Hagley 22.
- ¹³⁵ Witness to lease by Warwick, 1383: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 68r; possibly present at council, 1385: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 319; took out pardon in 1398 with John Grene, Robert Huggeford and Thomas Knyght: TNA C 67/30, m. 16.
- ¹³⁶ Attorney to Warwick in Common Pleas, 1369–96: TNA CP 40/436, m. 229d.; CP 40/474, m. 371d.; SC 6/1123/5; BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r; councillor, 1386, feed, 1392–3: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 329; BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; involved in foundation of chantry at Lapworth: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 104r; trustee to Richard Herthill: *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, p. 73.
- ¹³⁷ Co-defendant with William Morton, William Hopkyns, 1371: TNA CP 40/444, m. 122; feed, 1392–3, 1396–7: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ¹³⁸ Goods forfeited because of connection with Warwick, 1397, but returned: *CCR 1396–9*, pp. 155, 157; was appointed by Surrey as legal counsel to the Cardians in their dispute with John Catesby, 1398: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', p. 325.
- ¹³⁹ MP for Warwick, 1377, 1380, 1382, January 1397: *Return: Members of Parliament*, pp. 196, 205, 213; *HP* I, pp. 669–70; co-founder of Guild of Holy Trinity with Warwick and Sir William Beauchamp, 1383: *CPR 1381–5*, p. 268; regular witness to transactions by

Appendix I

- Warwick, 1378–92: BL Add. MS 28024, fols. 16r, 83v, 98v, 125r, 146v; leased land in Warwick from the earl, 1384–8, farmer of Lee field (Warwick), 1396–9: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 147r; WCRO CR 1886/481; councillor, 1387: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 125r; officer, 1395–6: TNA SC 6/1123/5; founded chantry at St Mary's, Warwick, to pray for the royal family, Warwick and his wife, Richard Beauchamp and his wife and Walden himself: Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 314; feoffee to William Barewell, 1383: SBT DR 3/119.
- ¹⁴⁰ Feed, 1392–3, 1396–7: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ¹⁴¹ Executor to Margaret Wiltshire, 1385: *Register of Henry Wakefield*, pp. 224–5; feed by Warwick, 1392–3, 1396–7: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ¹⁴² Witness to grant by Warwick, 1389: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 78v; officer by 1400–1: WCRO CR 1886/483; witness to grant by John Wodelowe, 1387: WCRO CR 26/A/wix
- ¹⁴³ Witness to grant by Warwick, 1385: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 166v; sub-sheriff Worcs. 1390–July 1397: *L&I* 9, p. 157; councillor, 1392: HWRO 899:95/4; juror at Richard Beauchamp's proof of age, 1403: *CIPM 1399–1405*, pp. 292–3; MP for Worcs. 1404: Driver, 'Knights of the Shire III', pp. 19–20; witness to enfeoffment by Ralph Ardern, 1400: WCL B 858.
- ¹⁴⁴ BL Eg. Ch. 8663; HWRO 705:962/5.
- ¹⁴⁵ Agent to Earl Thomas I, 1363: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 82r; admitted to fraternity of St Albans with Warwick, 1377: BL Ct. Nero D VIII, fol. 129v; closely associated with William Beauchamp, 1388–1400: *CFR 1383–91*, p. 247; *CPR 1388–92*, p. 307; SBT ER 1/65, no. 455; *CCR 1399–1402*, p. 116.
- ¹⁴⁶ Left 100 shillings by Katherine Beauchamp, 1369: HWRO b716.093; admitted with Margaret Beauchamp to fraternity of St Albans, 1380: BL Nero D VIII, fol. 129v; present at Warwick Castle to witness setting of day of arbitration: Post, 'Ladbroke Dispute', pp. 318–19; made will at Warwick (proved September 1387). Left manor of Bradenham to her son John, Warwick, Nicholas Lylling, Giles Mallore, William Spernore, John Danyel; her executors were: the countess of Warwick, Roger Tangeley, Nicholas Trymenell, John Warneley: *Register of Henry Wakefield*, pp. 224–5.
- ¹⁴⁷ Acting as receiver in 1402–3: BL Eg. Ch. 8770; but links with Beauchamp affinity stretch back to c. 1387 when he used Beauchamp men as witnesses regularly, for example Nicholas Warrewyk, William Hull, William de la Chaumbre, Richard Martyn, John Mountford, John More, Robert Walden: WCRO CR 26/A/wvii, ix, xii, xiii, xiv.
- ¹⁴⁸ Recipient of legacy in Margaret Wiltshire's will: *Register of Henry Wakefield*, pp. 224–5; feed, 1392–3, 1396–7: BL Ct. Ch. iv 27; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.
- ¹⁴⁹ Employed as Warwick's steward in Hertfordshire before 1397; acting as officer in 1395–6 and loaned Warwick money: *CIMisc 1392–7*, pp. 105; TNA SC 6/1123/5; main-pennor to Henry Ardern, 1381: *CFR 1387–93*, p. 276.
- ¹⁵⁰ Witness to grant by Warwick, 1376: BL Ct. Ch. xi 70; feed by Warwick, 1396–7: BL Eg. Ch. 8769; trustee to William Beauchamp, 1396: SBT ER 1/65, n. 455; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 690.

The Beauchamp affinity, c. 1369–c. 1401

- ¹⁵¹ Attorney to Warwick, 1382: *CCR* 1381–5, p. 410; agent in land transactions, 1395–6, 1400: *CIMisc* 1392–9, p. 133; *CCR* 1399–1401, p. 92; witness to grant by Warwick, 1385: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 97v.
- ¹⁵² From 1372 to 1374 associated with Henry Ardern, John Harewode, Robert Derlaston, Robert Burgulon in assize of novel disseisin: TNA JUST 1/1480, m. 15, 1481, m. 71, 1482, m. 5d.; witness to grant to Warwick, 1376: BL Add. MS 28024, fol. 100r; steward at Tanworth by 1387: TNA KB 27/506, *Rex*, m. 7.
- ¹⁵³ Presented by Warwick, 1395: HWRO b716/4b.
- ¹⁵⁴ Officer 1395–7: TNA SC 6/1123/5; BL Eg. Ch. 8769.

Appendix II A

ACTIVE WARWICKSHIRE JUSTICES OF
THE PEACE, 1369–1401

- 20 January 1373, **Warwick**¹ John Honyngton, Simon Pakeman, Philip Purfrey
13 November 1374, **Warwick**² Thomas Beauchamp *et sociis suis*
15 December 1376, **Warwick**³ Henry Ardern *et sociis suis*
14 May 1381, **Coventry**⁴ John of Gaunt, Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, John Rous
11 June 1381, **Warwick**⁵ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
15 July 1381, **Warwick**⁶ Thomas Beauchamp, Henry Ardern, Robert Burgulon,
John Catesby
9 December 1381, **Warwick**⁷ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
8 January 1382, **Warwick**⁸ Henry Ardern, Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
27 March 1382, **Warwick**⁹ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
26 May 1382, **Warwick**¹⁰ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
1 October 1382, **Warwick**¹¹ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
8 December 1383, **Warwick**¹² Thomas Beauchamp, Robert Burgulon, John
Catesby, Robert Stafford
27 January 1384, **Birmingham**¹³ John Bermyngeham, Robert Burgulon
19 April 1384, **Warwick**¹⁴ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, Robert Stafford
9 January 1385, **Warwick**¹⁵ John Catesby, John Clinton, Robert Stafford
6 June 1385, **Warwick**¹⁶ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
22 July 1385, **Warwick**¹⁷ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
28 September 1385, **Warwick**¹⁸ Robert Burgulon, John Catesby
3 October 1391, **Warwick**¹⁹ Thomas Beauchamp, William Astley, Robert Burgulon,
John Catesby, John Clinton, William Purfrey
2 April 1392, **Warwick**²⁰ Thomas Beauchamp, William Astley, John Catesby, John
Clinton, William Purfrey
1 October 1392, **Warwick**²¹ William Astley, John Catesby, William Purfrey
15 April 1393, **Warwick**²² Thomas Beauchamp, John Catesby, William Purfrey
28 July 1393, **Warwick**²³ William Astley, John Catesby, John Clinton, William Purfrey

Active Warwickshire justices of the peace, 1369–1401

- 1 October 1393, Warwick**²⁴ William Astley, John Catesby, John Clinton, William Purfrey
- 12 January 1395, Coventry**²⁵ William Astley, John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey
- 21 April 1395, Warwick**²⁶ William Astley, John Catesby, William Purfrey
- 9 December 1395, Coventry**²⁷ Richard Clerk, Richard Lichfeld, Thomas Purfrey
- 13 March 1396, Warwick**²⁸ Thomas Beauchamp, Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey
- 25 May 1396, Warwick**²⁹ Thomas Beauchamp, Robert Burgulon, John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey
- 30 May 1396, Coventry**³⁰ Richard Clerk, Thomas Purfrey
- 27 July 1396, Warwick**³¹ Thomas Beauchamp, John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey
- 26 September 1396, Warwick**³² Thomas Beauchamp, John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey, William Purfrey
- After 3 April 1398–before September 1399**³³ William Bagot, Robert Tirwhit, William Thirnyng
- 1 March 1399, Warwick**³⁴ William Bagot, John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey
- 16 September 1399, Warwick**³⁵ William Astley, John Catesby, Thomas Purfrey

NOTES

- ¹ TNA KB 27/453, *Rex*, m. 11: indictment of Robert Daneston, parson of Preston Bagot, for robbery.
- ² TNA JUST 3/166, m. 8.
- ³ TNA KB 27/465: indictment of John Marchal for ravishing Joan, wife of John Lowe.
- ⁴ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 95–6, 102–3. Indictments against Sir John and Thomas Burdet and the abbot of Alcester for receiving felons.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 98–9, 118: indictment of John Dunclet, official of the bishop of Worcester for extortion; indictment of various malefactors from the Solihull region.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120: indictments against John Bocher for theft from John Pecche (also tried before justices of gaol delivery for rioting).
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 105–6: indictments against William Grevil for fraudulent purchase of wool and against Thomas Compton, previously under-sheriff of Warwickshire for extortion.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 105–6: indictments against officers of the bishop of Worcester for extortion.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129: indictments concerning dispute at Solihull.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109: indictments concerning attack on the constable of Shortready, John James, by Alexander and John Feryer.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156–7: indictments against Thomas Hawe as a result of dispute at Solihull.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 161: indictments against William Whitheved, former servant of the earl of Stafford, for assaulting the earl's bailiff, the theft of a horse and threatening arson.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 162: indictments against John Bentley and John Wyrley for the theft of rabbits from Sir Thomas Erdington at Erdington, and against Simon Lichfeld and Henry Wasteneys for theft of wool from Richard Shobenhale at Aston.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139: indictments against John Derby for death of William Wyrley in January 1384.

Appendix II A

- ¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 147, 165: indictment against William Walton for the death of the servant of William Cherlton in 1378 and against Thomas Haukeshawe for receiving him; indictment against the bailiff of Edward Meteley for attempted murder of Roger Lapworth in July 1384.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 149: indictments against John Burnell, clerk, for theft from Rose Mountford and death threats against her.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 150: indictments against John Cole for death of John Mallory of Coleshill on 9 July 1385.
- ¹⁸ TNA KB 27/500, *Rex*, m. 13d.: indictments against Lewis Cardian (alias Cook) and others for assault on William Hobyns of Warwick, and theft from him and William Mountford.
- ¹⁹ TNA KB 9/173/1, m. 13: indictments against Adam Sampson and others for death of Thomas Souter at Newton on Dunsmore on 8 July 1391.
- ²⁰ TNA C 258/29 (38): indictments against Thomas and Henry Hendeman for death of Thomas Souter.
- ²¹ TNA C 258/29 (38): indictments against Richard Waryn, theft from Robert Porter at Ettington on 11 June 1392.
- ²² TNA C 258/29 (38): indictments as in n. 21, against Richard and Walter Waryn.
- ²³ TNA KB 9/172/1: indictments against Richard Haloughton, smith, for assault and theft.
- ²⁴ TNA KB 9/176, m. 143: indictments against Richard Barbour and others of his guild for forming an illegal conventicle and conspiring not to work.
- ²⁵ TNA KB 9/174, m. 12: indictments against Adam Sampson for death of Thomas Souter.
- ²⁶ TNA KB 9/176, m. 143: indictments against Richard Barbour for illegal sale of wool.
- ²⁷ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 77–8: indictments against Nicholas Cokkes, Adomar Lichfeld and John Goldsmith for conspiring to besiege Coventry.
- ²⁸ TNA KB 9/176, m. 76: indictments against Sir William Bagot and John Bray.
- ²⁹ TNA KB 9/176, m. 13: indictments against Bagot, Bray and Bagot's servant.
- ³⁰ *Warwickshire Sessions of the Peace*, pp. 76–7: indictments against William Swetenham and Thomas Quynnton for conspiring with Bagot to besiege Coventry.
- ³¹ TNA KB 9/176, m. 59: indictments against William Ilshawe.
- ³² TNA C 88/70: indictments against William Sutton, Thomas Jurdan and John Colman.
- ³³ TNA JUST 3/188, m. 14. No date or place is given for this session, though since it was concerned with a murder which took place on 3 April it must have been after this date, but before Bagot's fall in 1399. It concerned indictments for murder against Richard Clodeshale and John Auncell.
- ³⁴ TNA KB 9/185/1, m. 9: indictments against Adam Sampson for death of Thomas Souter.
- ³⁵ *CIMisc 1399–1402*, p. 25: indictments against William Bagot for theft of muniments from Alice and Nicholas Baron at Wolston on 15 November 1396.

Appendix IIB

ACTIVE WORCESTERSHIRE JUSTICES OF
THE PEACE, 1369–1401

- 29 May 1374, **Worcester**¹ John Botetourt *et sociis*
13 April 1375, **Worcester**² Thomas Beauchamp, Henry Ardern, John Botetourt,
Henry Bruyn, Robert Burgulon, John atte Wode
28 June 1375, **Worcester**³ Thomas Beauchamp *et sociis*
25 March 1377, **Worcester**⁴ Thomas Beauchamp *et sociis*
5 October 1377, **Worcester**⁵ John Botetourt, Henry Bruyn
3 April 1378, **Worcester**⁶ Thomas Beauchamp *et sociis*
23 October 1380, **Worcester**⁷ Henry Bruyn *et sociis*
12 July 1382, **Worcester**⁸ John Botetourt *et sociis*
28 October 1382, **Worcester**⁹ Henry Bruyn *et sociis*
27 February 1384, **Worcester**¹⁰ John Cassy *et sociis*
12 January 1385, **Worcester**¹¹ John Cassy *et sociis*
21 October 1391, **Worcester**¹² Robert Burgulon, Walter Cokesey, John atte Wode
9 June 1394, **Worcester**¹³ Robert Russell *et sociis*
11 January 1395, **Worcester**¹⁴ Robert Russell *et sociis*
18 March 1395, **Evesham**¹⁵ John Cassy *et sociis*
3 June 1395, **Worcester**¹⁶ John Cassy *et sociis*
27 September 1395, **Worcester**¹⁷ Robert Russell *et sociis*
10 January 1396, **Worcester**¹⁸ John Cassy *et sociis*
23 May 1396, **Worcester**¹⁹ Robert Russell *et sociis*
25 September 1396, **Worcester**²⁰ Robert Russell *et sociis*
8 January 1397, **Worcester**²¹ John Cassy *et sociis*
15 June 1397, **Worcester**²² Robert Russell *et sociis*
20 July 1397, **Worcester**²³ John Hull *et sociis*
13 December 1397, **Worcester**²⁴ John Cassy *et sociis*
24 August 1398, **Worcester**²⁵ John Blount, John Cassy, John Russell
17 June 1400, **Worcester**²⁶ Thomas Belne, Hugh Burnell, Walter Cokesey, Robert
Russell, Thomas Throkmerton

Appendix IIB

24 March 1401, Worcester²⁷ Henry Bruyn, Robert Russell *et sociis*

16 June 1401, Worcester²⁸ Hugh Burnell, Walter Cokesey *et sociis*

NOTES

- ¹ TNA KB 27/456, *Rex*, m. 1: no other details given.
- ² TNA KB 27/461, *Rex*, m. 20l: indictments against Percival and Agnes Walssh.
- ³ TNA JUST 3/166, m. 8.
- ⁴ TNA JUST 3/166, m. 7d.
- ⁵ TNA KB 27/494, *Rex*, m. 33: indictments against John Walssh, tailor of Bromsgrove, for theft of money from the church at Rock.
- ⁶ TNA JUST 3/166, m. 8.
- ⁷ TNA JUST 3/172, m. 2.
- ⁸ TNA JUST 3/172, m. 4d.
- ⁹ TNA JUST 3/172, m. 2.
- ¹⁰ Putnam (ed.), *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, pp. 416–17: indictments against Thomas Perot for theft from church at Feckenham.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 416–17: indictments for two cases of theft.
- ¹² TNA C 88/70 (89): indictments against Thomas Smyth for threatening and ambushing John Smyth at Yardley.
- ¹³ Putnam (ed.), *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, p. 415: indictments against John Castell for counterfeiting money.
- ¹⁴ TNA C 88/70 (164): indictments against William Janyn for breaking into the house of Robert de la Mare at Eldersfield on 19 May 1393.
- ¹⁵ Putnam (ed.), *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace*, p. 414: indictments against John Lytelwalker for assault.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 415: indictments against John Walker for theft from John Kemme.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 415: indictments against Thomas Middelmor for theft.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 415: indictments against John Lucas for assault.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 413: indictments against John Parlour for theft of game from the prior of Worcester.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 409: indictments against Welshmen for attacks on lands belonging to abbot of Hales.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 408: indictments against perpetrators of attacks on Ombersley (held by abbot of Evesham).
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 406: indictments against Henry Shepurde for theft.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 407: indictments against Hugh Mortimer and his kinsmen for attempted murder.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 402: indictments against those responsible for breaking into Ombersley in 1376.
- ²⁵ TNA C 258/34 (7): indictments against Thomas Couper for theft from abbot of Pershore.
- ²⁶ TNA C 258/35 (18): indictments against Walter and Alice atte Putte for theft from Thomas Passenaunt of Shelsely Walsh.
- ²⁷ TNA JUST 3/73/1, m. 3: indictments against Richard Meteborn for theft.
- ²⁸ TNA JUST 3/73/1, m. 4.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

BIRMINGHAM REFERENCE LIBRARY (BRL)

Hagley Hall Collection
Hampton Papers (consulted on microfilm)
Keen Collection
Lady Scott's Charters
Miscellaneous Deeds
Norton Collection
Taylor of Strensham Collection, compotus rolls for Yardley
Wingfield-Digby A Collection

BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON

Additional MSS
Including 28024, the Beauchamp Cartulary
Additional Rolls and Charters
Cotton Charters
Egerton Rolls and Charters, including 8769–70, account rolls of the receiver-general, Warwick
Harley Charters
Stowe MSS, including 143, fol. 29, Beauchamp charters, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries

HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE, WORCESTER

^b705:4, Kempsey
705:7, Vernon Collection
705:24, Benington Archives
705:27, Hyde Collection
705:32, Sebright Collection
705:61, Beoley and Kidderminster
705:66, Churchill Archives
^b705:85, Schedule for Wollas Hall Collections, including Vampage pedigree

Bibliography

- 705:95, Hambury
705:99, Beauchamp–Lygon Collection
705:126, Gurney Collection
705:139, Ledbury
705:150, Feckenham
705:192, Hambury
705:260, Hanbury
705:326, Elmridge
705:349, Westwood (consulted on microfilm)
705:380, Westwood and Cotheridge
705:550, Bewdley
705:962, Phillips Collection
^b716:093, 4a, Register of William Lynn, Bishop of Worcester
^b716:093, 4b, Registers of Henry Wakefield and Robert Tideman, bishops of Worcester
899:28, stray deed
899:49, Bishampton
899:95, Holland–Martin (Elmley Castle Records)
899:219, Elmley Castle, Compotus Roll
970:5:32, *The Sebright Collection, Copies of and Extracts from Some of the Older Documents*,
ed. W.A. James (1936)
989:9:227, transcription of gift by William Bromley

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, LONDON (TNA)

- C 1, Chancery: Early Proceedings
C 44, Court of Chancery: Common Law Pleadings, Tower Series
C 47, Chancery: Miscellanea
C 49, Chancery and Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Parliamentary and Council Proceedings
C 61, Chancery: Gascon Rolls
C 66, Chancery: Patent Rolls
C 67, Chancery: Supplementary Patent Rolls
C 81, Chancery: Warrants for the Great Seal, series 1
C 88, Chancery: Files: Records upon outlawries (Tower and Rolls Chapel Series)
C 146, Chancery: Ancient Deeds, Series C
C 244, Chancery: Corpus cum Causa Files
C 258, Chancery: Certiorari Corpus cum Causa Files
C 260, Chancery: Recorda Files
C 263, Chancery: Tower Rolls Chapel Series: Legal Miscellanea
CP 25/1, Common Pleas: Feet of Fines, Worcestershire and divers counties
CP 40, Common Pleas: Plea Rolls
DL 28, Duchy of Lancaster: Various Accounts
DL 29, Duchy of Lancaster: Ministers' Accounts
E 40, Exchequer: Treasury of Receipt: Ancient Deeds, Series A
E 41, Exchequer: Treasury of Receipt: Ancient Deeds, Series AA
E 42, Exchequer: Treasury of Receipt: Ancient Deeds, Series AS
E 43, Exchequer: Treasury of Receipt: Ancient Deeds, Series WS
E 101, Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Various Accounts

Bibliography

E 142, Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Extents, Inquisitions and Valors of Forfeited lands
E 159, Exchequer: Memoranda Rolls
E 163, Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Miscellanea of the Exchequer
E 210, Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Ancient Deeds, Series D
E 326, Exchequer: Augmentation Office: Ancient Deeds, Series B
E 372, Exchequer: L.T.R., Pipe Rolls
E 401, Exchequer: Receipt Rolls
E 404, Exchequer: Treasury of Receipt: Warrants for Issues
JUST 1, Justices Itinerant: Assize Rolls
JUST 2, Justices Itinerant: Coroners' Rolls and Files
JUST 3, Justices Itinerant: Gaol Delivery Rolls
KB 9, King's Bench: Ancient Indictments
KB 27, King's Bench: Plea Rolls
SC 1, Special Correspondence
SC 2, Special Collection: Court Rolls
SC 6, Special Collection: Ministers' Accounts
SC 8, Special Collection: Ancient Petitions
SC 11 and 12, Special Collection: Rental and Surveys

SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

DR 3, Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton
DR 5, Coughton Court MSS
DR 10, Gregory-Hood of Stivichall
DR 18, Leigh Collection
DR 37, Archer Collection
DR 98, Willoughby de Broke MSS
ER 1, Calendar of Captain J. Saunders' Warwickshire Collection

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE, WARWICK

CR 26, Waller of Woodcote
CR 47, Finch-Knightley of Packington
CR 133, Mordaunt of Walton
CR 136, Newdigate of Arbury
CR 162, Ward-Broughton-Leigh
CR 229, Shirley of Ettingdon
CR 299, Greswolde of Malvery Hall
CR 350, Browett of Bourton on Dunsmore
CR 593, Bickenhill Deeds
CR 712, Wotton Wawen Deeds
CR 1248, Shuckborough of Upper Shuckborough
CR 1886, Greville of Warwick Castle
CR 1998, Throckmorton Papers
CR 2168, Warwickshire and Staffordshire Deeds
CR 3271, Single Deed, Warwick
L 1, Holbech of Farnborough
L 4, Wolfhamcote Deeds

Bibliography

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL LIBRARY

Class B Deeds

CHRONICLES AND PRINTED SOURCES

- Annales Monasterii Sancti Albani a Johanne Amundesham*, ed. H. T. Riley (2 vols., RS, 1870-1)
- Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti*, in J. de Trokelowe et Anon., *Chronica et Annales*, ed. H. T. Riley (RS, 1866)
- The Anonimalle Chronicle, 1333-81*, ed. V. H. Galbraith (Manchester, 1927)
- The Beauchamp Cartulary Charters*, ed. E. Mason (Pipe Roll Society, NS, 43, 1980)
- Calendar of the Close Rolls ... Preserved in the PRO, 1369-1402* (9 vols., London, 1911-27)
- Calendar of the Fine Rolls ... Preserved in the PRO, 1369-1405* (5 vols., London, 1924-31)
- Calendar of the Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1348-1422* (5 vols., London, 1937-68)
- Calendar of the Inquisitions Post Mortem, 1365-1405* (7 vols., London, -87)
- Calendar of the General and Special Assize and General Gaol Delivery Commissions, Richard II* (London, 1977)
- Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... Preserved in the PRO, 1367-1401* (9 vols., London, 1903-13)
- A Calendar of the Register of Henry Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester, 1375-1395*, ed. W. P. Marrett (Worcestershire Historical Society, NS, 8, 1972)
- Catalogue of Ancient Deeds* (6 vols., London, 1890-1916)
- Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397-1400: The Reign of Richard II*, ed. C. Given-Wilson (Manchester, 1993)
- Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham ad Annum 1418*, ed. W. D. Macray (RS, 1863)
- Chronicon Adae de Usk*, ed. E. M. Thompson (London, 1904)
- Chronicon Angliae 1328-88*, ed. E. M. Thompson (RS, 1874)
- Continuatio Eulogii Historiarum 1361-1413*, ed. F. S. Haydon (RS, 1863)
- The Coventry Leet Book*, ed. M. D. Harris (Early English Text Society, OS, 4 vols. in 1, 1907-13)
- Créton, J., *Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre Richard*, ed. J. Webb, *Archaeologia*, 20 (1819)
- Dieulacres Chronicle*, ed. M. V. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, *BJRL*, 14 (1930), 125-81
- An English Chronicle of Richard II, Henry V and Henry VI*, ed. J. S. Davies (London, 1856)
- Eulogium Historiarum, 1066-1413*, ed. F. S. Haydon (3 vols., RS, 1858-63)
- Favent, T., *Historia Mirabilis Parlamenti 1386-8*, ed. M. McKisack (Camden Miscellany 14, 1926)
- Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae etc.*, ed. T. Rymer (20 vols., London, 1704-35)
- Fortescue, J., *The Governance of England*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1885)
- Froissart, J., *Chronicles*, ed. T. Johnes (2 vols., London, 1862)
- Higden, R., *Polychronicon*, ed. J. R. Lumby (9 vols., RS, 1865-86)
- Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, ed. G. B. Stow (Philadelphia, 1977)
- John of Gaunt's Register, 1371-75*, ed. S. Armitage-Smith (Camden Society, 3rd ser., 20-1, 1911)
- John of Gaunt's Register, 1379-83*, ed. E. C. Lodge and R. Somerville (Camden Society, 3rd ser., 56-7, 1937)

Bibliography

- The Kirkstall Chronicle*, ed. M.V. Clarke and N. Denholm-Young (BJRL, 15, 1931)
Knighton, H., *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337–1396*, ed. G. H. Martin (Oxford, 1995)
The Langley Cartulary, ed. P. Coss (Dugdale Society, 32, 1980)
Mum and the Sothsegger, ed. M. Day and R. Steele (Early English Text Society, OS, 199, 1936)
Private Indentures for Life Service in Peace and War 1278–1476, ed. M. Jones and S. K. Walker (Camden Miscellany 32, Camden 5th ser., vol. 3, 1994)
The Register of the Guild of the Holy Trinity, St. Mary, John the Baptist and St. Katherine of Coventry, ed. M. D. Harris (Dugdale Society 13, 1935)
The Reign of Richard II: From Minority to Tyranny, 1377–97, ed. A. K. McHardy (Manchester, 2012)
Reports from the Lords' Committees Touching the Dignity of a Peer of the Realm: Return of Members of Parliament, England 1213–1702 (2 vols., London, 1878)
Rolls of the Warwickshire and Coventry Sessions of the Peace, 1377–97, ed. E. G. Kimball (Dugdale Society 16, 1939)
Rotuli Parliamentorum, ed. J. Strachey et al. (London, 1767–77)
Select Cases before the King's Council, 1243–1482, ed. I. S. Leadam and J. F. Baldwin (Selden Society 35, 1918)
Select Cases in Chancery, 1364–1471, ed. W. P. Baildon (Selden Society 10, 1896)
Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, ed. G. O. Sayles (7 vols., Selden Society, 1936–71)
The Statute Merchant Roll of Coventry, 1392–1416, ed. A. Beardwood (Dugdale Society 17, 1939)
Walsingham, T., *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley (2 vols., RS, 1863–4)
Warwickshire Feet of Fines, 1345–1509, ed. L. Drucker (Dugdale Society 18, 1943)
The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–94, ed. L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey (Oxford, 1982)

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Alcock, N. W., 'The Catesbys of Coventry: A Medieval Estate and its Archives', *Midland History*, 15 (1990), 1–37
Anonymous, 'The Will of Sir John Russell of Strensham, 1404', *Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, NS, 39 (1962), 59–60
Aravingian, M., 'A Lancastrian Polity? John of Gaunt, John Neville and the War with France, 1368–88', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* III (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 121–42
Archer, R. E., 'Rich Old Ladies: The Problem of Late Medieval Dowagers', in A. J. Pollard (ed.), *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History* (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 15–35
Archer, R. E., and Walker, S. K. (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays Presented to Gerald Harriss* (London, 1995)
Aston, M., 'The Impeachment of Bishop Despenser', *BIHR*, 38 (1965), 127–48
'Richard II and the Wars of the Roses', in R. F. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 280–317
Avery, M. E., 'The History of the Equitable Jurisdiction of Chancery before 1460', *BIHR*, 42 (1969), 129–44
Baker, J. H., *An Introduction to English Legal History* (London, 1979)

Bibliography

- Baldwin, J. F., *The King's Council in England during the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1913)
- Barron, C. M., 'The Deposition of Richard II', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 132–49
- 'The Quarrel of Richard II with London, 1392–7', in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 173–201
- 'Richard II: Image and Reality', in D. Gordon (ed.), *Making and Meaning: The Wilton Diptych* (London, 1993)
- 'The Tyranny of Richard II', *BIHR*, 41 (1968), 1–18
- Barron, C. M., and Monnas, L. (eds.), *The Court of Richard II and the Artistic World of the Wilton Diptych* (London, 1996)
- Bayley, C. C., 'The Campaign of 1375 and the Good Parliament', *EHR*, 55 (1940), 370–83
- Bean, J. M. W., *The Decline of English Feudalism* (Manchester, 1968)
- From Lord to Patron: Lordship in Late Medieval England* (Manchester, 1989)
- Bellamy, J. G., *Bastard Feudalism and the Law* (London, 1989)
- Criminal Law and Society in Late Medieval and Tudor England* (Gloucester, 1984)
- 'The Northern Rebellions in the Later Years of Richard II', *BJRL*, 47 (1964), 254–74
- Bennett, M. J., *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'* (Cambridge, 1983)
- 'Henry of Bolingbroke and the Revolution of 1399', in G. Dodd and D. Biggs (eds.), *Henry IV: The Establishment of the Regime, 1399–1406* (York, 2003), pp. 9–33
- Richard II and the Revolution of 1399* (Stroud, 1999)
- 'Richard II and the Wider Realm', in A. Goodman and J. L. Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 187–204
- Biggs, D., 'The Appellant and the Clerk: The Assault on Richard II's Friends in Government, 1387–9', in G. Dodd (ed.), *The Reign of Richard II* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 57–70
- 'The Reign of Henry IV: The Revolution of 1399 and the Establishment of the Lancastrian Regime', in N. Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England I* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 195–210
- 'Sheriffs and Justices of the Peace: The Patterns of Lancastrian Governance, 1399–1401', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* (1996), 149–66
- Three Armies in Britain: The Irish Campaign of Richard II and the Usurpation of Henry IV, 1397–99* (Brill, 2006)
- Bill, P. A., *The Warwickshire Parish Gentry in the Later Middle Ages* (Dugdale Society Occasional Papers 17, Oxford, 1967)
- Bothwell, J. S., *Edward III and the English Peerage: Royal Patronage, Social Mobility and Political Control in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2004)
- Bothwell, J. S. (ed.), *The Age of Edward III* (York, 2001)
- Britnell, R. H., and Pollard, A. J. (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society* (Stroud, 1995)
- Brown, A. L., *The Governance of Late Medieval England, 1272–1461* (London, 1989)
- 'The Reign of Henry IV: The Establishment of the Lancastrian Regime', in S. B. Chrimes, C. D. Ross and R. A. Griffiths (eds.), *Fifteenth-Century England, 1399–1509* (2nd edn, Stroud, 1995), pp. 1–28

Bibliography

- Carpenter, M. C., 'The Beauchamp Affinity: A Study of Bastard Feudalism at Work', *EHR*, 95 (1980), 514–32
- 'Fifteenth Century Biographies', *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), 729–34
- 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England', *JBS*, 33 (1994), 340–80
- 'Law, Justice and Landowners in Late Medieval England', *Law and History Review*, 1 (1983), 205–37
- Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992)
- 'Political and Constitutional History: Before and After McFarlane', in R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society* (Stroud, 1995), pp. 175–206
- 'War, Government and Governance in England in the Later Middle Ages', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century VII: Conflicts, Consequences and the Crown in the Late Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 1–22
- The Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge, 1997)
- Castor, H., *The King, the Crown and the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power, 1399–1461* (Oxford, 2000)
- Catto, J. I., 'Sir William Beauchamp between Chivalry and Lollardy', in C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (eds.), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood III* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 39–48
- Cherry, M., 'The Courtenay Earls of Devon: The Formation and Disintegration of a Late-Medieval Aristocratic Affinity', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), 71–97
- Chrimes, S. B. *An Introduction to the Administrative History of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1952)
- 'Richard II's Questions to the Judges, 1387', *Law Quarterly Review*, 72 (1956), 365–90
- Chrimes, S. B., Griffiths, R. A., and Ross, C. D. (eds.), *Fifteenth-Century England, 1399–1509* (2nd edn, Stroud, 1995; orig. Manchester, 1972)
- Clanchy, M. T., 'Law, Government and Society in Medieval England', *History*, 59 (1974), 73–78
- Clark, L., 'Magnates and their Affinities in the Parliaments of 1386–1421', in R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society* (Stroud, 1995) pp. 127–53
- Clark, L. (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century VII: Conflicts, Consequences and the Crown in the Late Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2007)
- Clarke, M. V., *Fourteenth Century Studies* (Oxford, 1937)
- 'The Lancastrian Faction and the Wonderful Parliament', in *Fourteenth Century Studies* (Oxford, 1937), pp. 36–52
- Clarke, M. V., and Galbraith, V. H., 'The Deposition of Richard II', *BJRL*, 14 (1930), 125–55
- Clements, D., 'Richard II's Ninth Question to the Judges', *EHR*, 86 (1971), 96–113
- Coss, P. R., 'Bastard Feudalism Revised', *Past and Present*, 125 (1989), 27–64
- The Langley Family and its Cartulary: A Study in Late Medieval 'Gentry'* (Dugdale Society Occasional Papers 22, Oxford, 1974)
- Crook, D., 'Central England and the Revolt of the Earls, January 1400', *BIHR*, 64 (1991), 403–10
- Davies, R. G., 'Richard II and the Church in the Years of "Tyranny"', *JMH*, 1 (1975), 329–62
- 'Some Notes from the Register of Henry de Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester, on the Political Crisis of 1386–1388', *EHR*, 86 (1971), 547–58

Bibliography

- Davies, R. R., 'Baronial Accounts, Income and Arrears in the Later Middle Ages', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 21 (1968), 211–29
- Conquest, Coexistence and Change, Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987)
- Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282–1400* (Oxford, 1978)
- 'Richard II and the Principality of Chester, 1397–99', in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 256–79
- Dobson, R. B. (ed.), *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (2nd edn, London, 1983)
- Dodd, G., *Justice and Grace: Private Petitioning and the English Parliament in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2007)
- 'Richard II and the Transformation of Parliament', in G. Dodd (ed.), *The Reign of Richard II* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 71–84
- Dodd, G. (ed.), *The Reign of Richard II* (Stroud, 2000)
- Dodd, G., and Biggs, D. (eds.), *Henry IV: The Establishment of the Regime, 1399–1406* (York, 2003)
- Driver, J. T., 'The Knights of the Shire for Worcestershire during the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V', *Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, NS, 40 (1963), 42–64
- 'Worcestershire Knights of the Shire, 1377–1421, II', *Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd ser., 4 (1974), 19–33
- 'Worcestershire Knights of the Shire, III', *Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd ser., 5 (1976), 7–22
- du Boulay, F. R. H., *An Age of Ambition: English Society in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1970)
- du Boulay, F. R. H., and Barron, C. M. (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971)
- Dugdale, W., *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (2 vols. in 1, London, 1730)
- The Baronage of England* (2 vols. in 1, London, 1675–6)
- Monasticon Anglicanum* (6 vols., London, 1817–30)
- Dunn, A., 'Exploitation and Control: The Royal Administration of Magnate Estates, 1397–1405', in M. Hicks (ed.), *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 27–44
- 'Richard II and the Mortimer Inheritance', in C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England II* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 159–70
- Dyer, C., *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: The Estates of the Bishop of Worcester, 680–1540* (Cambridge, 1980)
- 'The Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381', in R. H. Hilton and M. Aston (eds.), *The English Rising of 1381* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 9–24
- Eales, R., and Sullivan, D., *The Political Context of Law: Proceedings of the Seventh British Legal History Conference Canterbury 1987* (London, 1987)
- Edwards, J. G., 'The Parliamentary Committee of 1398', *EHR*, 40 (1925), 321–33
- Emden, A. B., *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to AD 1500* (3 vols., Oxford, 1957–8, repr., 1989)
- Fletcher, C., *Richard II: Manhood, Youth and Politics, 1377–99* (Oxford, 2008)
- Fowler, K. (ed.), *The Hundred Years' War* (London, 1971)
- Frame, R., 'England and Ireland, 1171–1399', in M. Jones and M. Vale (eds.), *England and her Neighbours, 1066–1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplain* (London, 1989), pp. 139–55

Bibliography

- Fryde, N. B., *The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II* (Cambridge, 1979)
- Gillespie, J. L., 'Richard II: Chivalry and Kingship', in Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 115–38
- 'Richard II: King of Battles?', in Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 139–64
- 'Richard II's Archers of the Crown', *JBS*, 18 (1979), 14–29
- 'Richard II's Cheshire Archers', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 125 (1974), 1–39
- 'Richard II's Knights: Chivalry and Patronage', *Journal of Medieval Studies*, 13 (1987), 143–59
- Gillespie, J. L. (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997)
- Gillingham, J. B., 'Crisis or Continuity? The Structure of Royal Authority in England, 1369–1422', in R. Schneider (ed.), *Das Spätmittelalterliche Königtum im Europäischen Vergleich* (Sigmaringen, 1987), pp. 59–80
- Given-Wilson, C., 'Adam Usk, the Monk of Evesham and the Parliament of 1397–8', *Historical Research*, 66 (1993), 329–35
- Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London, 2004)
- The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: The Fourteenth-Century Political Community* (London, 1987)
- 'The King and the Gentry in Fourteenth-Century England', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 37 (1987), 87–102
- 'The Manner of King Richard's Renunciation: A "Lancastrian Narrative"?', *EHR*, 108 (1993), 365–70
- 'Richard II and his Grandfather's Will', *EHR*, 93 (1978), 320–37
- 'Richard II and the Higher Nobility', in A. Goodman and J. L. Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 107–28
- 'Richard II, Edward II and the Lancastrian Inheritance', *EHR* 109 (1994), pp. 553–71
- The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England 1360–1413* (New Haven, 1986)
- Given-Wilson, C. (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England II* (Woodbridge, 2002)
- Goodman, A., 'John of Gaunt', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 67–87
- 'John of Gaunt: Paradigm of the Late-Fourteenth Century Crisis', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 37 (1987), 133–48
- John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1992)
- The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard II* (London, 1971)
- 'Richard II's Councils', in A. Goodman and J. L. Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 59–82
- Goodman, A., and Gillespie, J. L. (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999)
- Gordon, D., *Making and Meaning: The Wilton Diptych* (London, 1993)
- Gordon, D., Monnas, L., and Elam, C. (eds.), *The Regal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych* (London, 1997)
- Gorski, R., *The Fourteenth-Century Sheriff: English Local Administration in the Late Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2003)
- Gransden, A., *Historical Writing in England II, c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982)

Bibliography

- 'Propaganda in English Medieval Historiography', *JMH*, 1 (1975), 363–81
- Graßnick, U., "'O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable": The Deposition of Richard II and Mirrors for Princes', in J. S. Hamilton (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England IV* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 159–74
- Green, D., *Edward the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe* (London, 2007)
- 'The Later Retinue of Edward the Black Prince', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 44 (2000), 141–51
- Gross, A., *The Dissolution of the Lancastrian Kingship* (Stamford, 1996)
- Gundy, A., 'The Earl of Warwick and the Royal Affinity in the Politics of the West Midlands', in M. Hicks (ed.), *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 57–70
- Guy, J., *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988)
- Hamilton, J. S. (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England IV* (Woodbridge, 2006)
- Hanna, R. III, 'Sir Thomas Berkeley and his Patronage', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 878–916
- Harding, A., *The Law Courts of Medieval England* (London, 1973)
- 'The Revolt against the Justices', in R. H. Hilton and M. Aston (eds.), *The English Rising of 1381* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 165–93
- Hare, J. N., 'The Wiltshire Risings of 1450: Political and Economic Discontent in Mid-Fifteenth-Century England', *Southern History*, 4 (1982), 13–31
- Harper-Bill, C., and Harvey, R. (eds.), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood* (Cambridge, 1990)
- Harriss, G. L., 'The Dimensions of Politics', in R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society* (Stroud, 1995), pp. 1–20
- 'Introduction', in K. B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London, 1981), pp. ix–xxviii
- King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369* (Oxford, 1975)
- 'Political Society and the Growth of Government in Late Medieval England', *Past and Present*, 138 (1993), 28–57
- Shaping the Nation: England 1360–1461* (Oxford, 2005)
- Harvey, B., *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1977)
- Harvey, J. H., 'Richard II and York', in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 202–17
- Hicks, M. (ed.), *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2001)
- Hilton, R. H., *Bondmen Made Free. Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Risings of 1381* (London, 1973)
- A Medieval Society: The West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century* (London, 1967, 2nd edn, Cambridge, 1983)
- Hilton, R. H., and Aston, M. (eds.), *The English Rising of 1381* (Cambridge, 1984)
- Holmes, G. A., *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1957)
- The Good Parliament* (Oxford, 1975)
- The Later Middle Ages, 1272–1485* (London, 1975)
- Horrox, R., *Richard III: A Study in Service* (Cambridge, 1989)
- Howlett, D. A. (ed.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford, 1993)
- Hughes, A., *A List of Sheriffs for England and Wales* (PRO Lists and Indexes, NS, 9, London, repr. New York, 1963)

Bibliography

- Jack, R. I., 'Entail and Descent: The Hastings Inheritance, 1370 to 1463', *BIHR*, 38 (1965), 1-19
- Jewell, H., *English Local Administration in the Middle Ages* (Newton Abbot, 1972)
- Jones, M., 'Relations with France, 1337-1399' in M. Jones and M. Vale (eds.), *England and her Neighbours, 1044-1453* (London, 1989), pp. 239-58
- Jones, M. (ed.), *Gentry and Lesser Nobility in Late Medieval Europe* (Gloucester, 1986)
- Jones, M. and Vale, M. (eds.), *England and her Neighbours, 1044-1453* (London, 1989)
- Jones, R. H., *The Royal Policy of Richard II: Absolutism in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968)
- Jones, T., 'Was Richard II a Tyrant? Richard's use of the Books of Rules for Princes', in N. Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* v (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 130-60
- Kaeuper, R. W., 'Law and Order in Fourteenth-Century England: The Evidence of Special Commissions of Oyer and Terminer', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 734-84
- War, Justice and Public Order* (Oxford, 1988)
- Kirby, J. L., *Henry IV of England* (London, 1970)
- Lacey, H., "'Mercy and Truth Preserve the King": Richard II's Use of the Royal Pardon in 1397 and 1398', in J. S. Hamilton (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* iv (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 124-35
- Lander, J. R., *The Limitations of English Monarchy in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1989)
- Lapsley, G., 'The Parliamentary Title of Henry IV', *EHR*, 49 (1934), 423-49, 577-606
- 'Richard II's Last Parliament', *EHR*, 53 (1938), 53-78
- Lawrence, M., "'Too Flattering Sweet to be Substantial"? The Last Months of Thomas, Lord Despenser', in J. S. Hamilton (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* iv (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 146-58
- Leland, J., *The Itinerary of John Leland In or About the Years 1535-1543*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith (5 vols., London, 1907-10)
- Leland, J. L., 'The Oxford Trial of 1400: Royal Politics and the County Gentry', in J. L. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 165-89
- Lewis, N. B., 'The "Continual Council" in the Early Years of Richard II, 1377-80', *EHR*, 41 (1926), 246-51
- 'The Organisation of Indentured Retinues in Fourteenth-Century England', *TRHS*, 4th ser., 27 (1945), 29-39
- 'Simon Burley and Baldwin of Raddington', *EHR*, 52 (1937), 662-9
- Lindley, P., 'Absolutism and the Regal Image in Ricardian Sculpture', in D. Gordon, L. Monnas and C. Elam (eds.), *The Regal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych* (London, 1992), pp. 61-83
- McFarlane, K. B., 'Bastard Feudalism', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London, 1981), pp. 23-43
- England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London, 1981)
- Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972)
- The Nobility of Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1973)
- 'Parliament and "Bastard Feudalism"', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London, 1981), pp. 1-21
- McHardy, A. K., 'Haxey's Case, 1397: The Petition and its Presenter Reconsidered', in J. L. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 93-114
- 'Richard II: A Personal Portrait' in G. Dodd (ed.), *The Reign of Richard II* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 11-32
- McKisack, M., *The Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1959)

Bibliography

- McNiven, P., 'The Cheshire Rising of 1400', *BJRL*, 52 (1970), 375–96
- Maddern, P. C., *Violence and Social Order: East Anglia 1422–1442* (Oxford, 1992)
- Maddicott, J. R., 'The County Community and the Making of Public Opinion', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 28 (1978), 27–43
- Law and Lordship: Royal Justices as Retainers in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England* (Past and Present Supplement 4, Oxford, 1978)
- Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994)
- Thomas of Lancaster, 1307–22* (Oxford, 1970)
- Martin, G. H., 'Narrative Sources for the Reign of Richard II', in J. L. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997)
- Mason, E., 'Legends of the Beauchamps' Ancestors: The Use of Baronial Propaganda in Medieval England', *JMH*, 10 (1984), 25–40
- Maxwell-Lyte, H. C., *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal of England* (London, 1926)
- Medcalf, S. (ed.), *The Context of English Literature: The Later Middle Ages* (London, 1981)
- Milsom, S. F. C., *The Historical Foundations of the Common Law* (London, 1969)
- Mitchell, S., 'Richard II and the Broomcod Collar: New Evidence from the Issue Rolls', in C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England II* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 171–80
- Morgan, D. A. L., 'The King's Affinity in the Polity of Yorkist England', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 23 (1973), 1–25
- Morgan, P., *War and Society in Medieval Cheshire, 1277–1403* (Manchester, 1987)
- Morris, R. K., 'The Architecture of the Earls of Warwick in the Fourteenth Century', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 161–74
- Mott, R. A. K., 'Richard II and the Crisis of 1397', in I. Wood and G. A. Loud (eds.), *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor* (London, 1991), pp. 165–77
- 'A Study in the Distribution of Patronage, 1389–99', *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, 15 (1974), 113–33
- Musson, A., 'Second "English Justinian" or Pragmatic Opportunist? A Re-Examination of the Legal Legislation of Edward III's Reign', in J. S. Bothwell (ed.), *The Age of Edward III* (York, 2001), pp. 69–88
- Musson, A., and Ormrod, W. M., *The Evolution of English Justice: Law, Politics and Society in the Fourteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1999)
- Myres, J. N. L., 'The Campaign of Radcot Bridge in December 1387', *EHR*, 42 (1927), 20–33
- Nash, T., *Collections for a History of Worcestershire* (2 vols., London, 1781–2)
- Oliver, C., *Parliament and Political Pamphleteering in Fourteenth-Century England* (York, 2010)
- Ormrod, W. M., 'The Origins of the Sub Poena Writ', *Historical Research*, 61 (1988), 11–20
- Political Life in Medieval England, 1300–1450* (London, 1995)
- The Reign of Edward III: Crown and Political Society in England, 1327–77* (New Haven, 1990)
- Ormrod, W. M. (ed.), *England in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1986)
- Fourteenth-Century England III* (Woodbridge, 2004)

Bibliography

- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online edition), www.oxforddnb.com
- Palmer, J. J. N., 'The Anglo-French Peace Negotiations, 1390–96', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 16 (1966), 81–94
- 'The Authorship, Date and Historical Value of the French Chronicles on the Lancastrian Revolution: II', *BJRL*, 61 (1979), 398–421
- England, France and Christendom, 1377–99* (London, 1972)
- 'English Foreign Policy, 1388–99', in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 75–107
- 'The Impeachment of Michael de la Pole in 1381', *BIHR*, 42 (1969), 96–101
- Palmer, R. C., *English Law in the Age of the Black Death* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993)
- The Wilton Dispute, 1264–1380* (Princeton, 1984)
- Partington, R., 'Edward III's Enforcers: The King's Sergeants-at-Arms in the Localities', in J. S. Bothwell (ed.), *The Age of Edward III* (York, 2001), pp. 89–106
- Payling, S. J., *Political Society in Lancastrian England: The Greater Gentry of Nottinghamshire* (Oxford, 1991)
- Perroy, E., *The Hundred Years War* (London, 1951)
- Phillipotts, C. J., 'John of Gaunt and English Policy towards France, 1389–95', *JMH*, 16 (1990), 363–86
- Plucknett, T. F. T., *A Concise History of the Common Law* (5th edn, London, 1959)
- 'Impeachment and Attainder', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 3 (1953), 145–58
- 'The Impeachments of 1376', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 1 (1951), 153–64
- 'The Origin of Impeachment', *TRHS*, 4th ser., 24 (1942), 47–7
- 'State Trials under Richard II', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 2 (1952), 159–71
- Pollard, A. J., *Late Medieval England, 1399–1509* (Harlow, 2000)
- Pollard, A. J. (ed.), *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History* (Gloucester, 1984)
- Post, J. B., 'Courts, Councils and Arbitrators in the Ladbroke Manor Dispute, 1382–1400', in R. F. Hunnisett and J. B. Post (eds.), *Medieval Legal Records Edited in Memory of C. A. F. Meekings* (London, 1978), pp. 289–339
- 'The Peace Commissions of 1382', *EHR*, 91 (1976), 98–101
- Powell, E., 'The Administration of Criminal Justice in Late-Medieval England: Peace Sessions and Assizes', in R. Eales and D. Sullivan (eds.), *The Political Context of Law: Proceedings of the Seventh British Legal History Conference* (London, 1987), pp. 49–57
- 'After "After McFarlane": The Poverty of Patronage and the Case for Constitutional History', in D. J. Clayton, R. G. Davies and P. McNiven (eds.), *Trade, Devotion and Governance* (Gloucester, 1994), pp. 1–16
- 'Arbitration and the Law in the Late Medieval Ages', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 33 (1983), 49–67
- Kingship, Law and Society: Criminal Justice in the Reign of Henry V* (Oxford, 1989)
- Putnam, B. H., 'The Transformation of the Keepers of the Peace into the Justices of the Peace, 1327–80', *TRHS*, 4th ser., 12 (1929), 19–48
- Putnam, B. H. (ed.), *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (London, 1938)
- Raban, S., *Mortmain Legislation and the English Church, 1279–1500* (Cambridge, 1982)
- Rawcliffe, C., 'The Great Lord as Peacekeeper', in J. A. Guy and H. G. Beale (eds.), *Law and Social Change in British History* (London, 1984), pp. 34–53

Bibliography

- The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham, 1394–1521* (Cambridge, 1978)
- Reitemeier, A., 'Born to be a Tyrant? The Childhood and Education of Richard II', in C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* II (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 147–58
- Richardson, H. G., 'Richard II's Last Parliament', *EHR*, 52 (1937), 39–47
- Roskell, J. S., *The Impeachment of Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk* (Manchester, 1984)
- Parliament and Politics in Late Medieval England* (3 vols., London, 1981–3)
- Roskell, J. S., Clark, L., and Rawcliffe, C., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1386–1421* (4 vols., Stroud, 1992)
- Ross, C. D., 'Forfeitures for Treason in the Reign of Richard II', *EHR*, 71 (1956), 560–75
- Russell, P. E., *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II* (Oxford, 1955)
- Saul, N., 'The Commons and the Abolition of Badges', *Parliamentary History*, 9 (1990), 302–15
- 'Conflict and Consensus in English Local Society', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 38–58
- 'The Kingship of Richard II', in A. Goodman and J. L. Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 37–57
- Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981)
- 'Local Politics and the Good Parliament', in A. J. Pollard (ed.), *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History* (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 156–71
- Richard II* (New Haven, 1997)
- 'Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship', *EHR*, 110 (1995), 854–77
- 'Richard II and Westminster Abbey', in W. J. Blair and B. Golding (eds.), *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 196–218
- 'Richard II, York and the Evidence of the King's Itinerary', in J. L. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 71–92
- The Three Richards: Richard I, Richard II and Richard III* (London, 2006)
- Saul, N. (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* I (Woodbridge, 2000)
- Fourteenth-Century England* V (Woodbridge, 2008)
- Sayles, G. O., 'The Deposition of Richard II – Three Lancastrian Narratives', *BIHR*, 54 (1981), 257–70
- 'King Richard II of England: A Fresh Look', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 115 (1971), 28–31, repr. in *Scripta Diversa* (London, 1981)
- Sherbourne, J., 'The Cost of English Warfare with France in the Later Fourteenth Century', *BIHR*, 1 (1977), 135–50, repr. in *War, Politics and Culture in Fourteenth-Century England* (London, 1994)
- 'The Defence of the Realm and the Impeachment of Michael de la Pole in 1386', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 97–116
- Skinner, Q. R. D., 'The Principles and Practice of Opposition: The Case of Bolingbroke versus Walpole', in N. McKendrick (ed.), *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J.H. Plumb* (London, 1974), pp. 93–128

Bibliography

- Starkey, D., 'The Age of the Household: Politics, Society and the Arts, c. 1350–1550', in S. Medcalf (ed.), *The Context of English Literature: The Later Middle Ages* (London, 1981), pp. 225–90
- Steel, A. B., *Richard II* (Cambridge, 1941)
- Storey, R. L., 'Liveries and Commissions of the Peace, 1388–90', in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 131–52
- Stow, G. B., 'Richard II in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques*', *JMH*, 11 (1985), 333–45
- 'Richard II in the *Continuatio Eulogii*: Yet Another Alleged Historical Incident?', in N. Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* v (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 816–29
- Stubbs, S., *The Constitutional History of England* (3 vols., Oxford, 1875–8)
- Taylor, C., '"Weep thou for me in France": French Views of the Deposition of Richard II', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* III (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 207–22
- Taylor, J., 'The Good Parliament and its Sources', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 81–96
- 'Richard II in the Chronicles', in A. Goodman and J. Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 15–36
- 'Richard II's Views on Kingship', *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, 15.5 (1971), 189–205
- Taylor, J., and Childs, W. (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990)
- Thornton, T., 'Cheshire: The Inner Citadel of Richard II's Kingdom?', in G. Dodd (ed.), *The Reign of Richard II* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 85–96
- Tout, T. F., *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England* (6 vols., Manchester, 1920–33)
- Towson, K., '"Hearts warped by passion": The Percy–Gaunt Dispute of 1381', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England* III (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 143–54
- Tuck, J. A., 'The Cambridge Parliament, 1388', *EHR*, 84 (1969), 225–43
- 'Henry IV and Europe', in R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society* (Stroud, 1995), pp. 107–26
- 'Nobles, Commons and the Great Revolt of 1381', in R. H. Hilton and M. Aston (eds.), *The English Rising of 1381* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 194–212
- 'Richard II and the Border Magnates', *Northern History*, 3 (1968), 27–52
- Richard II and the English Nobility* (London, 1973)
- 'Richard II and the Hundred Years' War', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 117–31
- 'Richard II's System of Patronage' in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 1–20
- The Victoria History of the County of Warwick* (8 vols. and index, London, 1904–69)
- The Victoria History of the County of Worcester* (4 vols. and index, London, 1901–26)
- Virgoe, R., 'The Crown and Local Government: East Anglia under Richard II' in F. R. H. du Boulay and C. M. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), pp. 218–41
- Walker, S. K., *The Lancastrian Affinity, 1361–1399* (Oxford, 1990)
- 'Richard II's Views on Kingship', in R. E. Archer and S. K. Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays Presented to Gerald Harriss* (London, 1995), pp. 49–63

Bibliography

- 'Sir Richard Abberbury (c. 1330–1399) and his Kinsmen: The Rise and Fall of a Gentry Family', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 34 (1990), 113–40
- 'Yorkshire Justices of the Peace, 1389–1413', *EHR*, 108 (1993), 281–313
- Watts, J., 'The Counsels of Henry VI, c. 1435–45', *EHR*, 106 (1991), 279–98
- Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996)
- Waugh, S. L., *England in the Reign of Edward III* (Cambridge, 1991)
- Wilkinson, B., *Studies in the Constitutional History of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Manchester, 1937)
- Wiswall, F. L., 'Politics, Procedure and the 'Non-Minority' of Edward III: Some Comparisons', in J. L. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Gloucester, 1997), pp. 7–25
- Wolffe, B. P. *The Royal Demesne in English History* (London, 1971)
- Wood, A. C. (ed.), *A Typescript List of Escheators for England and Wales* (PRO, List and Index Society 72, repr. New York, 1971)
- Wright, S. M., *The Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century* (Derbyshire Record Society 8, 1983)
- Wylie, J. H., *The History of England under Henry IV* (4 vols., London, 1884–98)

UNPUBLISHED THESES

- Allen, J., 'Richard II and the Localities, c. 1382–86', BA dissertation (Cambridge, 1996)
- Archer, R. E., 'The Mowbrays, Earls of Nottingham and Dukes of Norfolk to 1432', D.Phil. (Oxford, 1984)
- Astill, G. G., 'The Medieval Gentry: A Study in Leicestershire Society, 1350–99', Ph.D. (Birmingham, 1977)
- King, M., 'Richard II, Shropshire and the Northern March, c. 1383–97', M.Phil. (Cambridge, 2010)
- Mitchell, S. M., 'Some Aspects of the Knightly Household of Richard II', Ph.D. (London, 1998)
- Mott, R. A. K., 'Richard II's Relations with his Magnates, 1396–99', Ph.D. (Leeds, 1971)
- Sinclair, A. J. F., 'The Beauchamp Earls of Warwick in the Later Middle Ages', Ph.D. (London, 1987)
- Thompson, B. J., 'The Church and the Aristocracy: Lay and Ecclesiastical Landowning Society in Fourteenth-Century Norfolk', Ph.D. (Cambridge, 1990)
- Tyldesley, C. J., 'The Crown and the Local Communities in Devon and Cornwall, 1377–1422', Ph.D. (Exeter, 1978)

INDEX

- Abberley, 44
 Adderbury, Richard, 92, 184
 Alcester, 37, 54n.98, 263n.4
 Alcester, abbey of, 95
 Aldebury, Richard, 244
 Aldebury, Thomas, 206, 235, 244
 Aldebury, William, 244
 Aleyn, John, 69, 69n.40, 244
 Allesley, William, 126
 Alspath, 57
Anonimale Chronicle, 93
 Ansty, 156
 Appellant earls, 8, 9, 15, *see also* Beauchamp, Thomas II, earl of Warwick; Fitzalan, Richard, earl of Arundel; Henry IV; Mowbray, Thomas, earl of Nottingham; Gloucester, Thomas of Woodstock, duke
 Archer, Thomas, 59n.129, 83, 244
 Arden, 34, 36, 37, 38, 43, 58
 Ardern, Geoffrey, 215, 215n.118, 232, 234
 Ardern, Henry, 66, 70, 72, 76, 85, 92, 97, 244
 Ardern, Ralph, 212, 232, 244
 Arrow, River, 36
 Arundel, earl of, 9, *see also* Fitzalan, Richard
 Arundel, William, 156, 156n.92, 216, 217
 Aspley, 57
 Asplion, John, 169, 169n.167
 Assheby, Richard, 133
 Astill, G. G., 28, 29n.115, 44n.50
 Astley, priory of, 79, 80, 105, 135, 198
 Astley, Thomas, 224n.160
 Astley, William, 55, 224n.160
 Aston Cantlow, 233
 Aston dispute, 165, 177–80, 213–15, 234
 Atherstone, John, 245
 atte Wode, John, 89, 89n.132, 94, 104, 155, 155n.87
 Auncell, John, 214
 Austrey, 210
 Avon Dassett, 46
 Avon, River, 34, 122n.116, 248
 Badby, Robert, 162
 Baginton, 116, 157, 181, 183, 216, 230
 Bagot, William, 86, 87, 95, 110, 163, 177, 213, 245
 acquisition of Baginton, 116
 activities in 1390s, 177–85
 as sheriff of Warwickshire, 108, 182–3
 attack on Coventry, 179–80
 attack on Warwick assizes, 1396, 182
 complaints against, 231
 connection to Hendeman family, 181
 involvement in Aston dispute, 177–9, 178n.205, 215
 Justice of the Peace, 199, 201
 Ladbroke dispute, 215–19
 links with Mowbray affinity, 154
 member of Beauchamp affinity, 87
 member of Mowbray affinity, 133
 move to Lancastrian affinity, 86n.120, 87n.125, 177–85
 MP for Warwickshire, 145
 power base in Coventry, 157
 retained by Richard II, 151
 rivalry with John Catesby, 116–18
 treatment after 1399, 230
 Baldwin, J. F., 164
 Banbury, town of, 184
 Barcheston, 54, 250n.8
 Barchilway, 126
 Barewell, William, 78n.80, 87, 245
 Barnacle, 136
 Barnesdesley, Elizabeth, 75
 Barron, C., 5, 7, 24, 25, 30, 192
 Bassett of Drayton, Ralph, 42, 55, 131
 bastard feudalism, 14
 Baughton, 128, 170
 Beauchamp of Holt family, 54, 54n.98

Index

- Beauchamp of Holt, John I, 9, 42, 91, 93, 94, 99,
101, 104n.17, 124, 128n.150
career, 105
estates, 103, 103n.15, 135
execution, 134
Kidderminster, 105n.25
offices in Wales, 99n.2
relations with Thomas Beauchamp,
104–5, 106
- Beauchamp of Holt, John II, 136, 197
- Beauchamp of Powick family, 54, 54n.98
- Beauchamp, earls of Warwick, 29, *see also*
Beauchamp, Thomas I, earl of
Warwick; Beauchamp, Thomas II, earl of
Warwick; Beauchamp, Richard,
earl of Warwick
estates, 33, 42
hereditary franchises in
Worcestershire, 39
hereditary shrievalty in Worcestershire,
32, 39, 40
- Beauchamp, Guy, brother of Thomas II, 56
- Beauchamp, Joan, d. of Thomas I, 41, 55
- Beauchamp, Margaret, d. of Thomas I, 41, 55
- Beauchamp, Mary, 55
- Beauchamp, Philippa, 56
- Beauchamp, Richard, earl of Warwick, 66
affinity, 204–5
birth at Salwarpe, 41
career, 236
marriage, 222
opposition to Richard II, 222–3
settlement of estates, 229
support for Henry IV, 1399, 225
- Beauchamp, Sir William, 42, 75, 168, 235
acquisition of Kidderminster, 105n.25, 135
acquisition of Mountford inheritance,
42, 54, 83
captain of Calais, 55
career in Church, 48
chamberlain to Richard II, 55
dispute in Feckenham, 90, 163
dispute over Aston Cantlow, 233–4
early career, 53
estates, 54
Hastings inheritance, 55, 122–3, 186
relations with Thomas Beauchamp II, 54–5
role in 1387–8, 131–2
- Beauchamp, Thomas I, earl of Warwick
burial, 41
career under Edward III, 43
death, 62
endowment of William Beauchamp, 53
hereditary shrievalty of Worcestershire, 44
lordship of Gower, 185
marriage, 41n.33
marriage of children, 41–2
shrievalty of Warwickshire and
Leicestershire, 44
- Beauchamp, Thomas II, earl of Warwick, 5
affinity, 44, 67–8, 76–8, 82–9, 83n.105,
95, 115–19, 175–6, 203–7,
224–5, 235
and Bassett inheritance, 42
and Good Parliament, 65
and Mountford inheritance, 42
arrest, 1397, 10, 188–9
birth of son Richard, 41
building at Warwick Castle, 41
burial, 41
campaigns in France, 66, 66n.20
challenges to local power in 1390s, 160–4
death, 1401, 235
defection of John Russell, 1387, 127–8
deteriorating relations with Richard
II, 119–30
dismissed from office, 1389, 138
dispute in Feckenham, 90–2, 163–4
dispute with abbey of Evesham, 50, 84
dispute with abbey of Westminster,
50, 102
duketti rebellion, 229
enfeoffment of estates to Mowbray, 187
forfeiture of estates, 1397, 40–2, 194
hereditary shrievalty in Worcestershire, 69,
78, 162, 170, 174, 176–7, 229
impeachment of Nicholas Lylling, 170–3
in government, 1388, 135
inheritance in 1369, 43–6
Justice of the Peace, 71, 72
Justice of the Peace in Warwickshire,
113, 180–5
Justice of the Peace in Worcestershire, 79
Ladbroke dispute, 41, 235
lordship of Gower, 97, 121
loss of Gower to Thomas Mowbray, 185–6
marriage of half sister Mary, 55
marriage to Margaret Ferrers of Groby, 41,
41n.34, 56
Mortimer inheritance, 96, 152
Mountford inheritance, 83
murder of Ralph Stafford, 119–21
omitted from peace commission, 1399, 228
omission from peace commissions,
1379, 70, 89
Peasants' Revolt, 93
Pecche inheritance, 122n.116
problems in 1370s, 66–8, 82–9
purchase of estates, 42, 83
rebellion at Harringay, 1387, 129–30

Index

- relations with Henry IV, 160, 224, 226–30
relations with Henry Wakefield, bishop of Worcester, 50, 91
relations with Hugh, earl of Stafford, 57
relations with John Beauchamp of Holt, 104–5, 106
relations with John Botetourt, 53
relations with other Appellants, 119
relations with Richard II, 96–7, 102–3
relations with Sir William Beauchamp, 54–5
relations with William Bagot, 177–85
relationship with Edward III, 44
rescue, 1399, 222, 225
return to England, 1375, 82
Richard II retains Thomas Stafford, 151
role in 1387, 130–1
role in politics, 81n.94
role in politics during minority of Richard II, 81
role in politics in the 1390s, 160
Russell-Lylling dispute, 167–76
settlement of estates, 229
shrievalty of Warwickshire and Leicestershire, 44, 46
Spernall dispute, 84–6
Stafford minority, 121
trial, 1397, 193–4
Wonderful Parliament, 1386, 123
- Bellamy, J. G., 141n.13
Belne, Thomas, 228
Benet, Simon, 245
Bennett, M. J., 13n.53, 17n.70, 24, 28
Bereford, Baldwin, 91, 92n.144, 155, 155n.88
Berkeley, John I, 68
Berkeley, John II, 68
Berkeley, Thomas, 222, 222n.151
Bermyngeham, John, 66, 82, 108, 113, 210, 245
Bermyngeham, Thomas, 66, 82, 245
Bermyngeham, William, 178
Bernard, Robert, 245
Besford, Alexander, 44, 50, 50n.78, 104, 136, 173, 174, 206, 245
Besvyll, John, 69
Bewdley, 51
Biggs, D., 227n.169
Birmingham, 36, 37, 113, 210
Birmingham Plateau, 36, 38, 53
Blackenhurst, 39, 47
Blount, John, 155, 158, 158n.109, 163, 172, 174, 175, 200, 202, 227
Blount, Walter, 175, 175n.191
Blythe, Thomas, 122n.117
Bole Hall, 210
Bolingbroke, Henry, *see* Henry IV, king of England
- Botetourt of Weoley family
 estates, 52–3
Botetourt, John, 53, 59, 71, 72, 89, 91, 111, 121
Botetourt, Joyce, 59
Bourton-on-Dunsmore, 46n.54
Bracebrugge, Ralph, 154, 154n.77
Bradenham, Robert, 67
Brailes, 46
Brandon, 156, 216
Bras, John, 199
Bray, John, 157, 157n.102, 182, 183
Bredon, Richard, 165, 168, 169
Bretton, William, 76, 77, 77n.73, 82, 245
Bridgnorth, 38, 121n.113
Brome, Robert, 245
Bromley, Ralph, 245
Bromley, Richard, 245
Bromsgrove, 37, 51, 266n.5
Brookhampton, 58
Brugge, Edmund, 67, 91, 245
Brugge, Thomas, 153, 173, 199, 207, 227, 245
Brugge, William, 245
Bruyn, Henry, 71, 72, 200, 201, 205, 245
Bubbenhall, 116, 117
Budbrooke, 43
Burdet family of Arrow, 44
Burdet, Thomas, 95, 178, 185, 203, 245
Burgh, William, 70n.44, 91n.142
Burgulon, Robert, 72, 114, 245
Burley, Simon, 9, 99, 99n.2, 101, 133, 134
Burnell, Edward, 152
Burnell, Hugh, 178, 214, 228, 235
 Botetourt inheritance, 53, 121
 connections with Lancastrian affinity, 152n.67, 228
 estates, 53n.95
 relations with Richard II, 121, 121n.113, 152
Burnell, John, 245
Bushley, 52
- Calais, 55, 131–2
Caludon, 57, 117
Calvey, John, 108, 109n.41, 120
Cambridge, Edward, earl of, 62
Cardian, Lewis, 46n.52, 117, 215, 216, 217
Careswell, Peter, 75
Carpenter, M. C., 13, 18, 22, 27n.109, 28, 29n.115, 33, 36, 40, 57n.120, 66, 148, 149n.50
Cassy, John, 89, 94, 104, 112, 174, 176, 202
Castell, George, 133, 133n.175
Castle Bromwich, 53, 76
Castor, H. R., 13, 22, 23, 30, 176
Catesby, John, 77n.74, 78, 78n.80, 92, 105, 105n.22, 116n.81, 136, 209, 225, 228, 245

Index

- Justice of the Peace, 72, 114, 200, 201
 Ladbroke dispute, 102, 208, 215–19, 235
 links to Beauchamp affinity, 76, 115n.76
 rivalry with William Bagot, 116–18, 183
 temporary seizure of goods, 1397, 201
- Cavendish, John, 73
 Chaddesley Corbet, 54
 Charles VI, king of France, 100n.4, 137
 Charlton, John, 75
 Cherry, M., 30, 143, 166
 Cheshire, county of, 28
 Cheshiremen, 10, 95, 140, *see also* Richard II
 Cheylesmore, 93, 157, 180
 Cheyne, Hugh, 133, 133n.174
 Cheyne, John, 233
 church
 estates, 34, 40, 47–8
 in politics, 47, 48–50
 Cinton, William II, 210
 Clarence, Lionel, duke of, 51, 62
 Claverdon, 43, 219
 Clent, 36, 53
 Clifford, Lewis, 75
 Clifton on Teme, 51
 Clinton, Edward, 153
 Clinton, Elizabeth, 145, 210
 Clinton, John, 55, 92, 114, 117
 marriage of widow, Elizabeth, 145, 210
 Clinton, Thomas, 153, 153n.75, 224n.160
 Clinton, William I, 55
 Clinton, William II, 55, 231
 Clodeshale, Richard, 214, 215n.117
 Cokesey, Walter, 59, 59n.126, 59n.129, 89, 200,
 206, 207, 230, 235, 245
 Cokesey, William, 59, 135, 245
 Comberton, 256n.93
 Commissions of the Peace, 142, 146–9,
 see also Justices of the Peace
 Compton Wyniates, 46, n.51
 Coughton, 37
 Council, king's, 164–6, *see also* Richard II
 Courtenay, Edward, earl of Devon, 143, 166–7,
 167n.152, 172
 Coventry and Lichfield, bishops of
 estates, 34
 Coventry, town of, 34, 37, 145, 211, 224
 attack by William Bagot, 179–80
 disputes, 116
 links with William Bagot, 157
 peace commission, 110
 relations with Richard II, 58
 royal interests in, 39, 80, 156–7
 under Richard II, 92–3
 visited by Richard II, 1387, 125, 126
 Cradley, 53
 Créton, John, 192, 192n.7
- Crewe, Thomas, 246
- Dalby, Hugh, 153, 153n.74, 199, 200, 200n.44
 Dalby, Robert, 153
 Danyel, John, 87, 118, 222, 225, 235, 246
 Davies, R. R., 33n.4
 de la Felde, Richard, 104
 de la Pole, Michael, earl of Suffolk, 121, 123,
 130, 131, 134
 de Vere, Robert, earl of Oxford and duke of
 Ireland, 9, 99, 101, 108n.36, 130, 131,
 134
 Derlaston, Robert, 76, 246
 Despenser family *see also* Gloucester, earls of
 estates, 39, 51, 52, 168
 Despenser, Sir Edward, 52
 Despenser, Edmund, earl of March
 marriage to Philippa, daughter of Duke of
 Clarence, 51
 Despenser, Elizabeth, 52
 Despenser, Henry, bishop of Norwich, 48
 Despenser, Thomas, earl of Gloucester, 173, 227
 acquisition of Beauchamp estates, 1397, 197
 affinity, 162
 estates, 52n.88
 involvement in dispute at Eldersfield, 169
 Justice of the Peace in
 Worcestershire, 199, 200
 minority, 52
 relations with Beauchamp affinity, 204, 207
 retained by Richard II, 153
 Devereux family, 79n.85
 Devon, county of, 18
 Devon, earl of, 143, *see also* Edward Courtenay,
 earl of Devon
 Deyncourt, John, 86, 86n.118, 118n.97
 Dieulacres, chronicle of, 191
 Doddingtree, 39, 44
 Dodyngselles, John, 86, 86n.118, 89
 Dordon, 59
 Dormston, 170
 Drayton, John, 165, 177, 177n.204, 178, 234
 Drew, Lawrence, 184
 Droitwich, 37, 38
 duketti, rebellion of, 1400, 1, 226, 229
 Dunclent, 54
 Durant, John, 246
- Earl's Croome, 128, 128n.152, 168, 170,
 170n.168, 205n.67, 250n.7
 earldom of Chester, 58
 Edward II, king of England, 5, 43
 deposition of, 1
 Edward III, king of England
 crisis of 1376, 16, 62
 justices of the peace, 27

Index

- superior eyre, 27
- Edward IV, king of England, 13, 22
- Edward, earl of Cambridge, 192
- Edward, prince of Wales (the Black Prince), 62,
75, 79, 81, 116
- Eldersfield, 168, 169, 220
- Elmdon, 77
- Elmley Castle, 41, 43, 197, 204, 248, 268
- Escheator, 26
of Warwickshire and Leicestershire, 69
- Evesham, abbey of
dispute with Thomas Beauchamp II, 50, 84, 211
estates, 39, 47
- Evesham, chronicle of, 124n.130, 191
- Eynesford, John, 199
- eyre, superior, 27, 28, 73, 125–7, 163, 211–12,
see also King's Bench, Court of
- Feckenham, forest of, 36, 37, 174
dispute in, 90–2, 110, 163–4
- Feldon, 34, 37, 38
- Ferrers family, 55, 56n.110
- Ferrers of Groby, Margaret, wife of Thomas
Beauchamp II, 41
- Ferrers of Groby, William, 41, 67
- Ferrers, Margaret, wid. of William, 68
- Ferrers, Philippa, 56
- Fitzalan, Richard, earl of Arundel, 9, 96, 119,
123, 124, 129, 130, 140, 160
alienation from Richard II, 140–1
arrest, 1397, 10, 188
Cheshire rebellion and criticism of
Gaunt, 140
trial, 1397, 193–4
war with France, 140
- Fitzalan, Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury,
48
- Flamville, William, 69, 82
- Flanders crusade, 1383, 48
- Flecknoe, 57
- Fosse Way, 37
- France
invasion, 1405, 39
peace negotiations with, 139–41
war with, 61, 100n.4
- Freville of Tamworth family, 59
- Freville, Baldwin II, 59, 59n.127, 89, 117, 156
- Fulwode, John, 206, 246
- Fyton, Richard, 69, 69n.40, 89, 246
- gentry, role of, 18–19, 29
- Gillespie, J. L., 11n.45
- Gillingham, J. B., 29
- Given-Wilson, C., 5, 10–11, 12, 13n.53, 14, 16,
21, 30, 142n.16, 151, 187, 190, 194n.18
- Glendower, Owen, 39
- Gloucester, earl of, 39, 197, *see also* Despenser,
Thomas, earl of Gloucester
- Gloucester, Thomas of Woodstock, duke, 48, 62,
81, 81n.97, 99, 110, 119, 123, 124, 129, 130,
132, 140
alienation from Richard II, 140–1
arrest, 1397, 10, 188
- Gloucester, town of, 10, 36, 38, 129n.156,
134, 138, 145, 163n.135, 187, 188,
192n.7, 211, 239
- Goldsmyth, John, 180
- good lordship, 7, 14
- Goodman, A., 8, 29, 57, 64n.14, 128, 242
- Goushill, Robert, 154, 154n.77, 162, 200,
200n.45, 216
- Gower, lordship of, 161
acquired by Thomas Beauchamp I, 40
awarded to Thomas Mowbray, 185–6
dispute over Bishopston, 97, 102, 121
- Great Witley, 44
- Greene, Henry, 163
- Grene, John, 207
- Grey, Reginald, lord of Rotherfield, 210
- Hadzor, 197
- Haggeley, Henry, 188, 214, 214n.111
- Halesowen, 36, 249
- Halford, 46n.51
- Halfshire, 39
- Hall, John, 202
- Hambury, 206
- Hambury, Reginald, 246
- Hanley, Castle of, 52, 168, 197
- Hanna, R., 222n.151
- Harewode, John, 76, 246
- Harriss, G. L., 12n.52, 17, 18n.75
- Harryngton, Robert, 161, 162n.127
- Harvey, J. H., 4n.15
- Haseley, 43
- Haselor, 219
- Haxey, Thomas, 142
- Haytley, Henry, 225, 246
- Hendeman family, 181, 181n.229, 183, 230,
see also Bagot, William
- Henry IV, king of England, previously earl
of Derby, 1
accession to the throne, 1399, 1
actions in 1399, 224
Appellant, 1387, 132
arrives at Warwick Castle, 1399, 219
intervention in Aston dispute, 234
intervention in dispute over Clinton
inheritance, 231–3
invasion, 1399, 192
Justice of the Peace in Warwickshire, 199
Lancastrian propaganda, 191

Index

- Henry IV, king of England, previously earl of Derby (*cont.*)
 position in 1399–1400, 226
 reaction to seizure of estates, 1399, 195
 relations with Thomas Beauchamp II, 160, 224, 226–30
 royal affinity, 23, 228
 trial and banishment, 1398, 195
- Henry V, king of England, 21, 23
- Henry VI, king of England, 5, 21, 22
- Hermesthorpe, John, 135, 246
- Herthill, Richard, 55, 68, 82, 246
- Hillary, Roger, 68, 68n.35
- Hoddington, Thomas, 174, 207, 211, 212, 214, 246
- Holland, John, earl of Huntingdon and duke of Exeter, 119, 120, 120n.107, 143, 166, 215, 217
- Holland, Thomas II, duke of Surrey
 acquisition of Beauchamp estates, 197
 acquisition of Lancastrian estates, 1399, 198
 acquisition of Mowbray lands, 1398, 198
 administration of former Beauchamp estates, 221–2
 experiences in Warwickshire, 1397–9, 208–9
 illegal hunting on Beauchamp estates, 220
 in Ireland, 1398, 208
 Justice of the Peace in Warwickshire, 200
 Ladbroke dispute, 215–19
 relations with Beauchamp affinity, 203
- Holmes, G. A., 61n.1, 84
- Holt, 135
- Holt, John I, 86, 166
- Holt, John II, 177, 178
- Holt, Margery, sister of William Bagot, 178
- Holt, Peter, 44, 88, 127, 135, 205, 206, 235, 246
- Holt, William, 234
- Hopkyns, William, 246
- Hore, Thomas, 77
- Huggeford, Robert, 205, 207, 222, 224, 246
- Hull, William, 209, 217, 246
- Hunt, Ralph, 92
- Huntingdon, earl of, *see* Holland, John
- Hwicce, kingdom of, 33
- Ilshawe, William, 154, 154n.80, 182, 184, 216
 impeachment, 171, *see also* parliament
- Jones, R. H., 4, 4n.17, 24
- Justices of the Peace
 attempted reforms in 1390s, 142, 146–9
 evolution of powers in fourteenth century, 12–13, 25–8
 in 1370s, 73
 in 1380s, 110–15
- in Warwickshire, 70–2, 89, 111–12, 113–14, 180–5, 199–200, 201–2, 228–9, 262–3
- in Worcestershire, 70–2, 89, 173–4, 176, 199–200, 202, 227–8, 265
- response to Peasants' Revolt, 94
- temporary appointments, 1397, 199
- Kaeuper, 12, 26n.104
- Kenilworth, Castle of, 57, 57n.119, 80, 155, 224
- Kidderminster, 38
- Kidderminster, barony of, 103, 197, *see also* Holt, John I and II
- Kidderminster, manor of, 42, 105, 135
- Kineton, 57
- King's Bench, court of, 72, 73, 73n.60, 74, 74n.61, 79, 125–7, 174–5, 211–12
- King's Norton, 51
- Kinver, forest of, 36
- Knighton, Henry, 125n.139, 131, 191
- Knyght, Thomas, 205, 207, 221, 222, 225, 246
- Kyngton, Richard, 246
- Lacey, H., 207n.77
- Ladbroke dispute, 41, 42n.37, 46, 102, 160, 208, 209, 215–19, 235, *see also* Catesby, John
- Ladbroke's manor, Tanworth, 42
- Lancaster, duchy of, 18, 28
 estates, 57
see also Henry IV, king of England; Lancaster, John of Gaunt, duke
- Lancaster, John of Gaunt, duke, 79
 affinity, 30, 82, 122n.117
 affinity in Warwickshire, 68–9, 85–6, 87–8, 95, 115–19, 161, 175–6
 affinity in Worcestershire, 163
 appointed to Warwickshire peace commission, 70
- Aquitaine, 140
- campaigns in France, 64n.13, 65
- criticised by Arundel, 140
- death and seizure of estates, 1399, 195
 estates, 57
- Good Parliament, 64
- in Castile, 63, 101, 107, 119
- inheritance, 63
- intervention in Warwickshire, 94–5
- involvement in Aston dispute, 178
- John Blount in Worcestershire, 175–6
- Justice of the Peace, 72, 199
- patronage of chroniclers, 191
- Peasants' Revolt, 93–4
- relations with Richard II in 1390s, 154–5, 155n.86
- replaces earls of Stafford, 151, 155, 155n.83
- return from Castile, 154, 163

Index

- role in politics under Edward III, 63n.10, 66, 73–4, 80, 83–93
- role in Richard II's minority, 88–93, 108–9
- threatened by Richard's retaining policy, 143
- Lander, J. R., 144n.31
- Langley inheritance, 74–6, 95
- Langley, John, 75
- Lapworth, 85
- Latimer, William, 62n.2, 64, 65n.15
- law and order, attitudes of nobility and gentry, 19–21, 146–9
- Lawrence, M., 208n.81
- le Scrope, Richard, 96
- le Scrope, William, earl of Wiltshire, 194, 200
- Lee Marston, 59
- Leicester, town of, 129, 145
- Leicestershire, county of, 68
- Leland, J., 34
- Lench, William, 215
- Lewkenore, William, 126, 246
- Lichfeld, Adomar, 157, 157n.103, 179, 199
- Lickey Hills, 36, 53
- Llandaff, bishop of, 97
- Long Buckby, 160
- Louches family, 177
- Lucy, William, 95
- Lylling, Nicholas, 66, 110, 110n.47, 111, 114, 117, 133, 205, 206, 207, 235, 247
 - dispute with John Russell, 128, 167–76
 - dropped from peace commission, 173
 - impeachment by John Russell, 170–3
 - rescue of Thomas Beauchamp II, 225
- Lyons, Richard, 65

- Maddern, P. C., 20, 148
- Magna Carta, 21
- Mallory, Giles, 207, 213, 247
- Mallory, Guy, 205n.68
- Malvern Chase, 36
- Mamble, 51
- March, earls of, 39, *see also* Mortimer family
- Margaret of Brotherton, 57
- Maundeville, Thomas, 87, 87n.123
- Maxstoke, Castle of, 210, 232
- Maxstoke, priory of, 233
- McFarlane, K. B., 4–5, 51n.19, 6–7, 10n.42, 14, 15, 15n.64, 16, 19
- Melton Mowbray, 58
- Mettley, Edward, 225, 225n.163, 228, 247
- Milcote, 59, 62n.2, 74, 75
- Mile, Robert, 50, 50n.74, 67, 91, 247
- Mitchell, S. M., 108n.36, 110, 111, 143
- monarch, role in law and order, 20–1
- Monk's Kirby, 58

- Montague, John, earl of Salisbury, 197, 200, 207, 227
- Morant, John, 124, 229, 247
- More, John, 247
- Morehall, 230
- Morehall dispute, 88–9
- Morehall, Agnes, 88
- Morehall, John, 247
- Morehall, Thomas, 247
- Mortimer family, *see also* March, earls of
 - claim to throne, 1399, 1
 - estates, 39, 51–2
- Mortimer family of Tedstone Wafer, 212
- Mortimer, Edmund, earl of March
 - affinity, 52n.84
 - death, 1381, 52
 - in Ireland, 51
- Mortimer, Roger, earl of March
 - estates, 52n.84, 96
 - in Ireland, 51, 152
 - minority, 52
 - retained by Richard II, 152
- Morton, William, 247
- Mott, R. A. K., 188n.254, 213
- Mountford of Beaudesert, Guy, 41
- Mountford, Baldwin, 86, 95
- Mountford, Guy, 55
- Mountford, John, 84, 211, 222, 231, 247
- Mountford, Richard, 247
- Mountford, Rose, 84, 85, 86
- Mountford, William, 166, 178
- Mowbray, Thomas, earl of Nottingham and duke of Norfolk, 68, 119, 119n.103
 - acquisition of Beauchamp estates, 1397, 145, 197
 - affinity, 161
 - awarded lordship of Gower and Beauchamp estates, 185–6
 - emergence in Warwickshire in 1390s, 153–4
 - estates, 57–8
 - forfeiture of lands, 1398, 198
 - Justice of the Peace, 199
 - trial and banishment, 1398, 195
- Musson, A., 27

- Namier, L. B., 6, 7, 8
- Naunton Beauchamp, 54
- Neville family, 143
- Neville, Alexander, archbishop of York, 48
- Neville, Henry, 161, 162n.127
- Neville, John, 62n.2, 64, 65n.15
- Newbold on Avon, 58
- nobility, role of, 19–21
- Normanton, Robert, 247
- North Piddle, 57

Index

- Northfield, 53
 Nottingham, town of, 145
 Nuthurst, 207
- Old Swinford, 53
 Olton, 77
 Ombersley, 84
 Ormrod, W. M., 81, 165n.143
 Oswaldslow, 40
 Otterburn, battle of, 136
 Oudeby, Thomas, 162, 162n.128
 Oxford, earl of, *see* de Vere, Robert
 oyer and terminer commissions, 26, 73, 73n.59, 109n.46, *see also* royal commissions
- Packwood, 77
 Pakeman, Simon, 70n.42
 Palmer, J. J. N., 61n.1, 131n.165
 Palmer, William, 69
 Parker, John, 124, 126, 127, 247
 parliament, 12
 1380, 94
 1383, 99–100
 Cambridge (1388), 135, 137, 138, 146
 Good (1376), 61, 64, 65–6, 80, 81, 123
 January 1393, 170
 January 1397, 142, 186
 Merciless (1388), 133–5
 September, 1397, 193
 Wonderful (1386), 107, 123–4
 Parys, William, 247
 Pathlow, 39
 patronage, 6–7, 13–17
 Payling, S. J., 18n.76, 19n.80
 Peasants' Revolt, 1381, 49, 93n.153, 93–4, 110
 Pecche, John II, 59, 59n.126, 59n.126, 95, 117, 121, 122n.116, 122n.117, 127
 Percy family, 143, 231
 Percy, Henry, 136
 Percy, Thomas, earl of Worcester, 184, 200, 227, 230
 Perewych, Roger, 82, 82n.101, 93
 Perrers, Alice, 62n.2, 65, 75, 75n.67
 Perroy, E., 61n.1
 Perry Croft, 210
 Pershore, 36
 Pershore, abbey of, 40
 Pershore, town of, 170, 220
 Peshale, Adam, 156, 156n.91
 Peyto, John I, 75, 75n.66, 76n.70
 Peyto, John II, 76, 95, 153, 153n.76
 Pinley, 74, 156
 Piriton, Richard, 67, 247
 Pirton, 54
 Plucknett, T. F. T, 171
 Plummer, C., 13, 15, 270
- Pole, Nicholas, 165
Polychronicon, 130
 Post, J. B., 111
 Potterspury, 87
 Powell, E., 13, 20, 21, 27, 72, 148
 Power, Walter, 97, 222, 222n.152, 225, 235, 248
 Prophete, John, 164, 165, 233
 Purfrey, Thomas, 78, 122n.116, 200, 201, 217, 229, 248
 Purfrey, William, 200, 248
 Putnam, B. H., 12, 147
- Questions to the Judges, 1387, 107, 129
 Quimperlé, 56, 65, 71n.51
 Quynnton, Thomas, 180
- Radbourne, 46
 Radcot Bridge, 37n.15, 130, 132, 194
 Raines, John, 225, 248
 Ray, John, 115n.78, 117–18, 179
 Rempston, Thomas, 228
 Richard II, king of England, 5
 Alexander Neville in Yorkshire, 48
 alienation of Gloucester and Arundel, 140–1
 and Appellant opposition, 1386–8, 15
 and Beauchamp estates, 1397, 40–2, 44
 and Cheshire, 10, 108
 and France, 10
 and law, 24–5, 164–76
 and Robert de Vere, 9
 and Simon Burley, 9, 99n.2
 appointment of Tideman of Winchcombe, 49
 appointments to local government, 1397–9, 198–200
 arrest of former Appellants, 10, 189
 attempted reform of peace commissions, 142, 146–9
 attitudes to kingship, 12, 24–5, 29, 106–7, 129, 195, 239–40, 241–3
 birth, 1367, 62
 challenges to Thomas Beauchamp's power, 160–4
 contemporary chroniclers' views, 190–2
 Coventry, 58, 92–3, 156–7, 179–80
 death of Ralph Stafford, 119–21
 deposition of, 1399, 1, 30–1, 241
 dispute in Feckenham, 90–2
 dispute with London, 1392, 142
 Edward III's will, 107
 estates in Warwickshire, 58, 90
 finances in 1390s, 141–2
 France, 100, 139–41
 gyration, 1387, 124–30
 Haxey's petition, 1397, 142
 lordship of Gower, 97, 185–6

Index

- Mortimer inheritance, 96
 pardons, bonds and recognisances, 212–13
 Peasants' Revolt, 94
 policy in Welsh marches, 9, 99, 106, 122
 possible deposition, 1387, 133
 possible insanity, 11–12
 promotion of John Beauchamp of Holt, 9,
 99n.2, 103–6
 protection of William Bagot, 177–85
 Questions to the Judges, 1387, 129
 reaction to Wonderful Parliament, 1386, 123
 rebellion in support, 1400, 1
 relations with John of Gaunt in the
 1390s, 154–5
 relations with Sir William Beauchamp, 55
 relations with Thomas Beauchamp, 96–7,
 102–3, 119–30
 relations with uncles, 82, 94, 97, 99n.2,
 100–1, 107, 109
 resumes power, 1388–9, 136–7
 role in government, 1381–2, 94
 royal affinity, 10, 11, 13, 14, 22, 29–30, 127–8,
 142–6, 149–60, 161–4
 seizure of Lancastrian estates, 1399, 195
 style of rule in the 1390s, 144–6
 use of chamber and signet seal, 3, 9, 108
 use of council, 164–6
 use of patronage, 9
 use of superior eyre, 125–7, 211–12
 visit to Coventry, 1387, 126
 visit to Worcester, 1387, 127
 Richard the Redeless, 159n.114
 Rock, 51
 Rody, Thomas, 248
 Rous, John, 67, 67n.26, 95, 248
 Royal affinity, 7, 13, 22, 142–6, 149–60
 under Henry IV, V and VI, 23
 royal commissions, 26, 28, 73n.59, 90, 108–9,
 109n.46, 163, *see also* oyer and terminer
 and trailbaston
 Rugby, 56
 Rushock, 54
 Russell family of Dyrham and Corse (Gloucs.),
 168, 168n.162, 169
 Russell, John, 151, 156, 163, 173, 228, 230, 248
 career after 1399, 204
 dispute with Beauchamp affinity, 167n.157,
 167–76, 220
 dispute with Nicholas Lylling, 128
 dispute with William Clinton II, 231–3
 impeachment of Nicholas Lylling, 170–3
 joins royal affinity, 127–8
 Justice of the Peace in Warwickshire, 200
 Justice of the Peace in Worcestershire, 202
 marriage to Elizabeth Clinton, 145, 200, 210
 role in Worcestershire, 158–9
 Russell, Robert, 158, 158n.107, 173, 176, 199,
 200, 227, 248
 Russell, William, 220
 Ruydyng, William, 248
 Ruyhall, Richard I, 69, 248
 Ruyhall, Richard II, 91, 153, 199, 203, 204,
 207, 214, 248
 Rykneild Street, 37

 Salisbury, earl of, *see* Montague, John
 Saltley, 214
 Salwarpe, 41, 41n.32, 84
 Sapy, John, 248
 Saul, N., 5, 11–12, 24, 28, 102, 104n.17, 123,
 142n.19, 148n.47, 149, 167n.152
 Say, John, 248
 Sayles, G. O., 191n.3
 Sayvill, Thomas, 228
 Segrave inheritance, 57
 Severn Stoke, 52
 Severn, River, 34, 36, 38, 39, 44, 51, 52, 52n.88
 Sheldon, 46
 Shelsley Beauchamp, 44
 Shephey, John, 92
 sheriff, 25, 26n.104
 of Warwickshire and Leicestershire, 69, 161
 Sheriff's Lench, 54
 Shippey, Robert, 232, 233, 234
 Shortley, 74
 Shotswell, 135
 Shottery, 156
 Shrawley, 44, 78n.83, 105, 197
 Shrewsbury, town of, 36, 38, 129
 Shustoke, 210, 232
 Skinner, Q. R. D., 16
 Smyth, William, of Catesby, 183
 Solihull, 36, 77
 Spennall, 67, 83
 dispute, 84–6
 Spennore, William, 44, 66, 67, 83, 84, 85,
 85n.112, 86, 88, 174, 203, 205, 206, 213, 215,
 225, 235, 248
 Spyney, Guy, 44, 88, 127, 133, 175, 185, 199, 203,
 205, 209, 217, 218, 221, 222, 231, 248
 Squiller, Nicholas, 248
 St. Mary's, Collegiate Church of, Warwick,
 41, 55, 209
 Stafford, earls of
 estates, 57
 minority, 121
 Stafford, Hugh, earl of, 68, 89, 113
 marriage to Philippa Beauchamp, 56
 murder of son Ralph, 119–21
 relations with Thomas Beauchamp II, 57
 Stafford, Ralph, 56
 Stafford, Ralph II, son of Hugh, 119

Index

- Stafford, Ralph of Grafton, 165
 Stafford, Ralph, earl of, 75
 Stafford, Richard, 89
 Stafford, Richard, brother of Earl Ralph, 75
 Stafford, Robert, 114, 114n.69
 Stafford, Thomas, 89, 248
 Stafford, Thomas, earl of, 151
 Stebbying, Edward, 67, 67n.27, 248
 Steel, A., 11
 Stivichall, 74, 156
 Stockton on Teme, 44
 Stoneleigh, abbey of, 113n.66, 230
 Storey, R. L., 18n.76, 115n.73, 146, 147, 148, 148n.47, 149n.50
 Stoulton, 197n.26
 Stratford-upon-Avon, 37, 42
 Strensham, 128, 172
 Stubbs, W., 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 15, 23, 241n.5
 Studley, 233, 234
 Stury, Richard, 158, 158n.110, 173
 Suffolk, earl of, *see de la Pole, Michael*
 superior eyre, 28, *see eyre, superior*
 Surrey, duke of, 197, *see also Holland, Thomas II*
 Sutton Coldfield, 36, 46, 214, 219
 Swetenham, William, 157, 157n.101, 182
- Talbot inheritance, 105, 135
 Tamworth, Castle of, 59
 Tamworth, town of, 165
 Tangeley, Ralph, 248
 Tangeley, Roger, 248
 Tanworth, 43
 Thirnyng, William, 201, 234
 Throkmerton, Thomas, 50, 50n.74, 203, 204, 207, 211, 212, 214, 248
 Thurgrym, Richard, 49, 104
 Thurlaston, 57
 Tideman of Winchcombe, bishop of Worcester, 49, 164
 Tirwhit, Robert, 201
 Tout, T. F., 3, 4, 5, 9, 15n.59, 23
 trailbaston, commission of, 26, *see also royal commissions*
 Tregoy's family, 160
 Tresilian, Robert, 125n.139, 134
 Trillowe, John, 75
 Trussell, Ailred, 127, 175, 205, 206, 207, 217, 235, 248
 Trussell, John, 205n.68, 213, 249
 Trymenell family, 203, 203n.54, 218, 249
 Trymenell, Richard, 207, 249
 Tuck, J. A., 8–10, 10n.42, 13, 15, 29, 30, 101, 108, 139, 141, 141n.13, 143, 147, 147n.43, 150n.54, 166, 167
- Tudor monarchs and royal affinity, 13
 Tutbury, Castle of, 155, 172, 175
 Tyldesley, C. J., 30, 143, 166
 Tysoe, 56
- Ulbarewe, Roger, 249
 Upton upon Severn, 52
 Usk, Adam of, 130, 191, 194, 194n.18, 235
- Vampage family, 205, 205n.68
 Vampage, John, 158, 158n.108, 163, 169, 199, 205, 220
 Veer, Robert, 162, 162n.129
 Vernon, Juliana, 87
 Virgoe, R., 115n.73
- Wakefield, Henry, bishop of Worcester, 48
 dispute in Feckenham, 90–2, 163–4
 Walden, Robert, 182, 206, 249
 Waldeyeve, Alan, 156
 Wales, 231
 Walker, S. K., 24, 24n.96, 27, 27n.107, 28, 28n.113, 30, 57n.118, 63n.10, 64, 67n.24, 148, 155
 Walsall, town of, 165
 Walsingham, Thomas, 81, 84, 93, 124n.130, 190, 191
 Walssh family of Sheldesley Walsh, 78, 78n.83, 79n.85, 80
 Walssh, Thomas, 69, 69n.37
 Warrewyk, Nicholas, 118, 126, 184, 249
 Warwick, Castle of, 43, 87, 197, 219, 224, 225
 Warwick, earldom of, 5
 Warwick, town of, 42, 145, 224
 Warwickshire, county of, 18
 geo-politics, 34
 joint shrievalty with Leicestershire, 32, 44, 46, 46n.55
 roads, 37
 Washebourne, John, 44, 162, 249
 Watts, J., 13, 16, 17, 63, 165
 Welsh marches, 9, 38–9, 99n.2, 106, *see also de Vere, Robert, earl of Oxford*
 Wenlok, William, 249
 Weoley, Castle of, 53
 Westminster chronicle, 130, 191
 Westminster, abbey of
 administration of estates, 50
 dispute with Thomas Beauchamp II, 50, 102
 estates, 40
 Weston in Arden, 36
 Whalley chronicle, 132, 191
 Whatcote, 56
 Willey, 46n.54

Index

- Wilmington, 56
Wilton Diptych, 208
Withybrook, 58
Wodeford, John, 162
Wodeville, John, 249
Wootton Wawen, 56
Worcester, bishops of
 administration of estates, 50
 estates, 34, 39, 40, 47
 relations with Thomas Beauchamp II, 50
 see also Tideman of Winchcombe;
 Wakefield, Henry
Worcester, Castle of, 43, 227
Worcester, earl of, 184, *see* Percy, Thomas
Worcester, town of, 36, 37, 38, 145, 211
 visited by Richard II, 1387, 127
Worcestershire, county of
 geo-politics, 34–6
 hereditary shrievalty, 32, 39, 197, 227,
 see also Beauchamp, earls of Warwick
 roads, 37–8
Worth, John, 75
Wyard, John, 249
Wyken, 74
Wyre Piddle, 169n.167, 250n.11
Wyre, forest of, 36
Wyrley, Cornelius, 178
Wyrley, Roger, 76, 126, 249
Yardley, 46
York, duke of, 192, *see also* Edward, earl of
 Cambridge

